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ABSTRACT

The Dispersed Heterogeneous Placement (DHP) supported employment project involved dispersal of three to five consumers across several departments/areas in a larger business or across several businesses in close proximity. The individuals placed had a wide range of talents and disability severity levels. Typically, a four-person site might have one person with mild retardation, two with moderate retardation, and one with severe or profound retardation. A combination of a single job coach and natural coworker support was provided to foster successful employment and social integration. Six sites were established over the 2 project years, offering nontraditional job opportunities in leading community firms. The job retention rate was lower than desired, and strategies for improving the success rate are suggested. Following the project description, four papers are presented, with the following titles and authors: "Dispersed Heterogeneous Placement: A Model for Transitioning Students with a Wide Range of Abilities to Supported Employment" (John Nietupski and others); "Incorporating Sales and Business Practices into Job Development in Supported Employment" (John Nietupski and others); "Leveraging Community Support in Approaching Employers: The Referral Model of Job Development" (John Nietupski and others); and "Job Retention within the DHP Project" (Sandra Chappelle and John Nietupski). (Some papers contain references.) (JDD)

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A Dispersed Heterogeneous Placement Supported Employment Model:

An Innovative Alternative For Transitioning Students with Mental Retardation from School to Work

Year 2 Report

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A Dispersed Heterogeneous Placement Supported Employment Model:

An Innovative Alternative for Transitioning Students with Mental Retardation from School to Work

Year 2 Report

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- Advisory Committee members in both communities
- Options of Linn County
- ARC of Johnson County
- Special Education teachers in the Iowa City and Cedar Rapids Community School Districts
- Grantwood Area Education Agency

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- IBM
- Mercy Medical Center
- Grantwood Area Education Agency
- Defense Contracts
- Iowa State Bank & Trust Company
- The University of Iowa Purchasing Department.

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We would be remiss if we didn't acknowledge the support of our colleagues and the staff at Iowa University Affiliated Program. In particular, we'd like to thank Tom Flynn, Jerry Murray, and Kim Merrick for their many contributions to this project especially for their ability to provide us with, at times, some very needed laughter.

Monograph Table of Contents

I.
DHP Project: Two-Year Report

II.
Dispersed Heterogeneous Placement:
A Model for Transitioning Students
with a Wide Range of Abilities
to Supported Employment

III.
Incorporating Sales and Business Practices
into Job Development in Supported Employment

IV.
Leveraging Community Support
in Approaching Employers:
The Referral Model of Job Development

V.
Job Retention Within the DHP Project

I.

DHP Project: Two-Year Report

DHP Project: Two Year Report

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Iowa University Affiliated Program

The University of Iowa

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The Dispersed Heterogeneous Placement (DHP) supported employment project completed its second year in July of 1992. This report summarizes the DHP project outcomes over the period of July, 1991 - May of 1992.

DHP Defined

The DHP supported employment model involves dispersal of three to five consumers across several departments/areas in a larger business or across several businesses in close proximity. The individuals placed have a wide range of talents and disability severity levels (heterogeneous). Typically, a four person site might have one person with mild retardation, two with moderate retardation and one with severe or profound retardation. A combination of a single job coach and natural co-worker support is provided to foster successful employment and social integration.

DHP Benefits

The DHP model was patterned after work in Wisconsin (Shiraga, 1989). The anticipated benefits of this approach include:

- Insuring representation of persons with more severe disabilities in supported employment.
- Offering a wider range of talents to an employer, allowing for performance of a broad array of necessary duties. This allows greater flexibility in meeting employer needs.
- Promoting integration by not congregating supported employees in a single area.
- Allowing for easily accessible back-up coach support when natural supports do not solve worksite problems that arise.
- Enabling greater cost effectiveness by reducing coach travel and by allowing a single coach to serve several persons.
- Access to larger corporations and non-traditional clerical-office jobs.

DHP Sites

Six sites were established over the two project years. Brief descriptions of each site are provided below.

Mercy Medical Center: 4 Supported Employees (PY1)

- Consumer with mild MR, housekeeping department, vacuums floors, moves equipment and furniture.

- Consumer with moderate MR, food preparation area, seals silverware and wraps bread and rolls.

- Consumer with moderate MR, dishroom, removes cleaned trays etc. from conveyor belt, places tray liners on clean trays, transports trays to tray line area.

- Consumer with severe MR, dishroom, places silverware into holders.

IBM: 4 Supported Employees (PY1)

- Consumer with mild MR, main office area, stocks parts, photocopies, waters plants, delivers mail, other duties/errands as assigned.

- Consumer with moderate MR, shredding area, shreds confidential documents.

- Two consumers with severe/profound MR, mail room area, staple and tri-fold materials, insert into mailing envelopes.

American College Testing: 4 Supported Employees (PY1)

- Consumer with mild MR, computer center, separates computer printouts, delivers printouts to departments/output boxes, sets up printer for various paper size, other duties as assigned.

- Consumer with moderate MR, publications department, breaks down old project files, assembles new file folders, photocopies, delivers mail and materials, sorts recyclable paper, rubberbands and paperclips and sharpen pencils.

- Consumer with moderate MR, financial aid department, matches financial aid statements to address labels, inserts statements and brochures into mailing envelopes, notes missing information on forms, enters data into computer.

- Consumer with severe MR, financial aid department, peels off address labels and applies to mailing envelopes, folds back mailing envelope flaps to speed up item insertion.

Grantwood Area Education Agency (PY2)[1]

- Consumer with mild MR, Print Shop, photocopier maintenance, shreds confidential documents, collates material, stuffs envelopes.

- Consumer with moderate MR, Media Center, checks-in media tapes, verifies that tapes have been rewound.

- Consumer with severe MR, Media Center, removes date due sticker from library books.

Defense Contracts Management Area Operations (PY2)

- Consumer with mild MR, main office area, photocopies, stocks and fills office materials requests, cleans cars upon return to motor pool, other duties as needed by DCMAO staff.

- Consumer with mild MR, Computer Center, data entry.

- Three (3) consumers with moderate MR, office areas, photocopying, applying labels for mailings, delivering internal mail, operating FAX machine, collecting and sorting recyclable paper.

- Consumer with severe MR, recycling area and breakroom, sorts recyclable paper, fills pop machine and cleans break room.

[1] A consumer with moderate MR was placed prior to DHP Project in the clerical area. She clips newspaper articles, files, photocopies, enters computer data, and other miscellaneous tasks as assigned.

Iowa State Bank and University of Iowa Purchasing Department (PY2)[2]

- Consumer with mild MR, UI Purchasing Dept. Filing Clerk, files requisitions, date stamps invoices and delivers mail.

- Consumer with mild MR, Bank Filing Assistant, sorts and files insurance information, files additional materials as requested, other duties as assigned.

- Consumer with moderate MR, Bank Clerical Assistant, photocopies, stamps debit/credit slips, collates and staples marketing materials, stuffs envelopes, delivers internal mail.

Overall Project Outcomes

- 37 persons originally placed, 24 in the six DHP sites. (See Table 1 for non-DHP site placements)
- Of the 24 consumers originally placed in DHP sites
  - 33% (8 of 24) had mild MR
  - 42% (10 of 24) had moderate MR
  - 25% (6 of 24) had severe/profound MR
- Hours/week worked ranged from 8 to 25.
- Wages earned ranged from $1.25/hr to $6.29/hr.

Status of PY1 Sites/Consumers as of 4/92

- 3 of 3 sites continue
  - Mercy: 4 consumers originally placed; 4 consumers currently placed

[2]A consumer with severe disabilities was proposed to start in the UI purchasing department to assist with mailings after the Filing Clerk learned her duties. Budget constraints prevented the hiring of this second Purchasing Department supported employee.

- ACT: 4 consumers originally; 2 consumers currently
- IBM: 4 consumers originally; 2 consumers currently

- 5 of 12 original consumers remain (42%), with three consumers replaced

- Reasons for job separation:
  - 2 resigned
  - 4 dismissed
  - 1 died
- Of 8 remaining/replaced consumers
  - 1 consumer has mild MR (12%)
  - 4 consumers have moderate MR (50%)
  - 3 consumers have severe/profound MR (38%)

Current Status of PY2 Sites/Consumers as of 4/92

- 3 of 3 sites continue
  - Bank/Purchasing Dept: 3 consumers originally placed; 3 currently placed
  - Grantwood: 3 DHP Project consumers originally added to one existing placement. 1 DHP Project placement to be filled in addition to previously existing placement.
  - Defense: 1 of 6 consumers
- 5 of 12 originally placed consumers remain (42%)
  - 3 resigned
  - 2 positions never filled due to unsupportive worksite climate
  - 2 positions eliminated due to budget cut backs

- Of 5 remaining consumers:
  - 2 have moderate MR (40%)
  - 3 have mild MR (60%)

Employment Status of 15 Displaced Workers In PY 1 & PY 2 as of 4/92

- 8 of 15 (53%) Employed:
  - 5 at individual placement sites
  - 3 at two-person job share placements sites
- 7 of 15 (47%) Unemployed:
  - 1 deceased
  - 2 voluntarily unemployed
  - 4 job development in progress

Preliminary Conclusions and Recommendations Based on Findings/Outcomes

Several conclusions and recommendations are beginning to emerge from our two years of experience with the DHP project. These preliminary recommendations are highlighted below:

Larger businesses do hold opportunities for persons with more severe disabilities.

Larger businesses often do have a variety of routine functions that, if assumed by supported employees, both create positions for persons with more severe disabilities and help the business by freeing higher skilled staff to focus on advanced functions. The key in creating such win-win situations is a detailed survey of job activities in each department. The three articles that follow this report detail the job development process used to gain access to larger businesses to obtain this information. As indicated, a thorough listing of duties, along with a careful parcelling out of those duties that match capabilities of the persons with the most

"niched" or narrow talents (i.e. persons with more severe disabilities) can result in jobs for this population.

Community potential should be assessed to determine DHP feasibility.

Not all communities may be suitable for DHP sites. The subjective view of project staff, based on two years of experience, suggests the following conditions increase the likelihood of successful DHP site establishment/maintenance:

-**Presence of one or more larger businesses** (100+ employees) or several intermediate size (25+ employees) in close physical proximity.

-**Presence of businesses with routine operational functions**. Increasingly, businesses such as banks and retailers are centralizing the manual or operational functions (e.g. mailing out interest checks, rolling coins, pricing product, bulk mailing, shredding) and/or are relying upon computer/electronic technology, rather than manual/paper-pencil process. Businesses that continue to perform routine manual operations seem better suited for DHP sites involving persons with more limited/niched skills.

-**Presence of businesses with relatively stable work volume** provide steady year-around job opportunities. Businesses with peaks/valleys in production, while creating temporary or peak period employment, may not provide on-going work unless supported employees have the flexibility to assume changing duties. While seasonal/temporary employment may not be ideal, it should not necessarily be ruled out if consumers desire such work and/or if the general workforce also faces such constraints (e.g. seasonal tourism areas).

Worksite climate needs to be assessed to determine its suitability.

In two DHP sites, project staff did not anticipate the underlying rigidity/lack of flexibility among front line staff. Relying upon the interest expressed by higher level decision makers, it was not until after placement that we noted the negative climate for some supported employees. Efforts made to resolve issues that arose proved unsuccessful in one case in particular. In that instance, three consumers were advised to resign and two, who were about to start their jobs were not placed. Future placements will address this problem by first establishing with the front-line staff a process to assist with problem resolution. During the survey process the staff will be encouraged to be participants in supported employment not just observers, thus creating the partnership vital to program success.

Agencies should avoid overselling job trainer on site supervision.

In two cases, we "oversold" trainer support to the point that fading became difficult. By involving employers as partners in the beginning, fostering their ownership and indicating that on-going support may take the form of consultation more than on-site supervision, we hope to rectify this problem.

Agencies might avoid placing the most capable employees first.

In one business, we placed an exceptionally talented person prior to placing persons who had more "niched" talents. We did so in the hopes that job training would be accomplished quickly, freeing the trainer to assist persons with more severe disabilities. Unfortunately, the expectations that developed in this particular business were that all subsequent supported employees would be as versatile and capable. Our inability to meet this expectation created problems that we were unable to resolve, despite considerable effort with co-workers. In the future, we plan to place individuals in the mid to lower range of skill capabilities first, hopefully creating less problems for subsequent supported employees.

Agencies might build toward DHP sites more gradually.

Agreeing to hire four supported employees is quite an extensive front end commitment for businesses to make. Agencies not faced with grant-imposed deadlines, might work toward DHP sites on a phased-in basis. For example, we are finding that two-person job shares seem more acceptable to businesses hiring supported employees for the first time. If agencies propose hiring two individuals, other positions might be created once employers feel comfortable and the coach identifies other departments that might be approached and duties that might be assumed. Letting a business know on the front end of their interest to expand if the initial efforts prove beneficial, might set the stage for expansion to a larger DHP site.

A business-like support agency is essential for success.

As indicated in the following articles, carving jobs in larger businesses requires an agency committed to serving both persons with disabilities and employers. Agencies that attend to the needs of the business and view themselves as consultants to and partners with the business are more likely to be successful with DHP sites. Larger businesses are not often faced with the massive employment problems facing the food service or hospitality industries (e.g. turnover, absenteeism, declining teenage workforce). Therefore, they tend to be more careful in deciding whether to consider supported employment. Agencies that seek to learn about a business' needs and carefully craft proposals that show how supported employment can benefit the business, agencies that provide follow-up contact/consultation and help the business anticipate and solve problems, would seem better suited to developing successful DHP sites in larger concerns.

Summary

The DHP project has placed 37 individuals in the past two years, 24 of which were in six DHP sites. The businesses have primarily offered non-traditional job opportunities in leading community firms. While there have been successes, the retention rate has been lower than anticipated or desired. Strategies for improving the success rate have been identified and suggested for future implementation. Conditions under which DHP sites might prove more feasible have been preliminarily offered. The results obtained through our third project year should provide further information regarding the viability of the DHP supported employment model.

Table 1

Non-DHP-Site Supported Employment Placements

JOB SITE	GENDER	CONSUMER SEVERITY LEVEL	POSITION
Chemistry Depart.	M	Mild MR	Mailroom Clerk
Gift Shop	M	Moderate MR	Stockperson
Food Distribution Warehouse	F	Severe MR	Paper Shredder, Bottle/Can Sorter
Food Distribution Warehouse	M	Mental Illness	Stockperson
Bank	M	Mild MR	Microfilmer
Manufacturer	M	Moderate MR	Circuit Board Assembly
Manufacturer	M	Autism	Circuit Board Assembly
Drug Store	M	Severe MR	Custodial
Drug Store	F	Moderate MR	Stocker
Grocery Store	M	Moderate MR	Stocker
Retirement Center	F	Mild MR	Food Service
Bank	F	Mild MR/Physical Disability	Statement Processor
Health Depart.	F	Mild MR/Physical Disability	Receptionist

II.

Dispersed Heterogeneous Placement: A Model for Transitioning Students with a Wide Range of Abilities to Supported Employment

DISPERSED HETEROGENEOUS PLACEMENT: A MODEL FOR TRANSITIONING STUDENTS WITH A WIDE RANGE OF ABILITIES TO SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

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Abstract

This article describes a supported model that combines features of the individual placement and enclave models. This approach, termed Dispersed-Heterogeneous-Placement (DHP), involves dispersal of three to five individuals with disabilities across several departments within a single business or across several nearby businesses. The individuals placed exhibit a range of capabilities and severity levels, allowing one job coach to support the consumers and the business.

A four-step process for developing DHP sites is presented. Two DHP sites are illustrated, one at the corporate headquarters of American College Testing and the second at a large hospital.

Unemployment is a major problem facing persons with disabilities in general and for those with the most severe disabilities in particular (Hill, Wehman, Kregel, Banks & Metzler, 1987; Kregel and Seyfarth, 1985; Wehman, Kregel, & Shafer, 1989). A comprehensive nationwide investigation (Kregel & Wehman, 1989) found that only 8% of all supported employment placements involve persons with severe or profound disabilities, prompting them to ask whether supported employment would ever become a reality for this group intended.

Better school employment preparation and transition planning has been advocated by Will (1984) to remedy these dismal employment findings. Ostensibly, transition efforts should improve post-school employment outcomes by assisting students in obtaining community jobs prior to graduation. Preliminary evidence in our own state seems to suggest otherwise, with only 13%, 6%, 1% and 0.1% of all adults with moderate, severe and profound retardation, respectively, receiving adult services placed in community jobs (Iowa DD Council, 1988).

Several reasons might be put forth to account for the continuing difficulty experienced by persons with more severe disabilities in obtaining community employment. First, as with many innovations, school and adult agencies may have focussed initially on placing less challenging individuals (Kregel & Wehman, 1989). Second, the intensity of support needs for persons with more severe disabilities (Wehman, Parent, Wood, Kregel & Inge, 1989) has caused concern among agencies with limited financial resources. Third, the widely used individual placement, job-coach model is costly if job coach support is provided on a 1-to-1 basis for an extended time period (Shafer, 1986).

Clearly, these findings and concerns suggest that innovative supported employment models must be developed. Historically, the two primary approaches to supported employment have been the individual placement model and group placement/enclaves (Gaylord-Ross, 1988). A primary benefit of the individual

placement model is that the natural proportions achieved can result in frequent opportunities for social interactions (Wacker, Fromm-Steege, Berg, & Flynn, 1989).

The enclave model, however, can lead to cost efficiencies because one job coach serves several consumers (Rhodes & Valenta, 1985). A model that includes this efficiency component, yet maintains the integration/interaction opportunities inherent in the individual placement model, might represent an innovation that allows persons with more severe disabilities to receive supported employment services.

The purpose of this paper is to describe and illustrate just such a model. Specifically, we will describe a "Dispersed Heterogeneous Placement" (DHP) model, describe a process for developing the model, and illustrate the model by describing its operation in a hospital and in a large educational testing firm.

Dispersed-Heterogeneous-Placement (DHP) Defined

Goetz, Lee, Johnston and Gaylord-Ross (1991), Moon, Inge, Wehman, Brooke, and Barcus (1990), Shiraga (1990) and Zivolich (1986) have briefly described an enclave variation in which several supported employees are dispersed across work areas or departments within a single business or across two or more businesses in close physical proximity. If such dispersal could be combined with heterogeneous groupings, persons with differing degrees of ability/support need, one job coach might feasibly support four or more consumers, including one with more severe disabilities. Since heterogeneous grouping is emerging as a successful classroom practice (Pumpian, West, and Shephard, 1989), its application to the workplace seems warranted.

DHP models offer several advantages over individual placement or enclave models in isolation. First, by dispersing consumers, natural proportions and interactions are facilitated. Second, job site supports can be flexibly tailored to allow for intensive assistance to consumers with greater support needs, while aiding

others on an as-needed basis to insure continued success (Moon et al., 1990). Third, businesses can be better served by placing persons capable of performing a wider range of duties. Finally, the small subtasks identified/carved for individuals with more severe disabilities may not appear inconsequential to employers when considered in the context of the wide range of functions performed by the dispersed "group."

A Process of Establishing DHP Model Sites

A federally funded project to evaluate the effectiveness of DHP models in transitioning students with disabilities from school to supported employment has been conducted since July of 1990 (Nietupski & Wacker, 1990). The DHP project sought to place four individuals across departments within a single business or across contiguous businesses. Generally, one supported employee had mild disabilities, one or two had moderate disabilities, and one or two had severe or profound disabilities. Since 1990, six sites have been developed in two communities.

The DHP project employed a four-step process for developing and implementing DHP sites for transitioning student. The steps in this process, listed in Table 1, are described in detail below.

Insert Table 1 Here

Step 1: Assess Consumer Job Interests, Skills and Support Needs

A key to successful post-school employment for transitioning students is a suitable match between job demands and consumer skills and interests (Moon et al., 1990). The DHP project attempted to develop such matches by conducting an in-depth, functional assessment prior to initiating job development efforts. This step was accomplished in several substeps. First, a consumer employment profile was

developed to compile assessment information on job-relevant skills and interests. This form, adapted from the work of Moon, Goodall, Barcus, and Brooke (1985), examined the employment-relevant areas listed in Table 2.

Insert Table 2 Here

Second, information was gathered by: 1) interviewing the consumer, classroom teacher, and family members; 2) observing the consumer in school, home and community settings; and 3) reviewing records documenting previous school and community-based work experiences; these methods allowed project staff to get to know consumers and develop a better understanding of their job interests and talents and support needs.

Third, an "ideal job match" hypothesis was derived from the completed information (McGloughlin, Garner, & Callahan, 1987). Such an hypothesis reflected the type of work and work environments seemingly best suited to student skills and interests.

Step 2: Job Development

Because the DHP model involves placement of several consumers, larger businesses were targeted for job development efforts. Because of their size and multiple organizational levels, larger businesses can be challenging to job developers (Nietupski, Verstegen, Hamre-Nietupski, & Tanty, in press).

In order to access larger businesses, a referral model approach was adopted. This model, described by Nietupski et al. (in press), uses "advocates" to gain access to decision makers in larger businesses. In both DHP project site communities, Cedar Rapids and Iowa City, adult agency, school staff and project advisory board members were contacted to identify potential advocates: persons supportive

of/receptive to supported employment who had close connections to upper management in larger firms.

Once potential advocates were identified, project staff met with them to explore who they knew, the strength of their relationships, and their willingness to speak on behalf of the project and provide access to their contacts. Through this activity, several strong advocates were identified: a co-worker whose husband was the senior vice president of a large local firm; an agency job developer who had a friendship with a hospital administrator; a project advisory board member who had contacts with a senior vice president at a bank and a current employer of persons with disabilities who served on committees with a bank president.

The advocates spoke with their contacts about the DHP project and the benefits of hiring supported employees. They also encouraged them to consider exploring how supported employment might benefit their business. Project staff then interviewed the business person to learn about the business and areas of perceived benefit. The interview consisted of a series of questions adopted from Nietupski, Verstegen, and Hamre-Nietupski (in press). For example, questions were asked concerning whether freeing staff from entry-level duties, whether freeing staff from screening, hiring and supervision responsibilities by providing a job coach or whether reducing turnover, accessing tax credits, and presenting a positive community image were of benefit.

If the survey showed employer interest, supervisors were interviewed and work areas examined to identify possible duties for transitioning students. This job site survey determined work duties, their volume, the time schedule and the key qualifications necessary for candidates to perform such duties. This information was used to carve job descriptions for students.

Armed with this information, staff then developed position descriptions tailored to the talents and interests of the consumers referred to the project. An

attempt was made to assign the higher order duties (e.g., alphabetical filing) to students with capabilities in those areas and more routine duties (e.g., paper shredding; stuffing envelopes) to students whose skills and interests were better suited to those tasks.

Written proposals then were developed and presented to the business, outlining areas of perceived benefit, supported employment job descriptions, recommended candidates for the positions, proposed wages and hours, cost estimates and an implementation timeline. Because subminimum wage provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act were used, cost projections included estimates of initial productivity levels. The implementation timeline typically staggered the introduction of supported employees over a one to two month period. Once the proposal was discussed and questions were answered, employers were asked to render a yes or no hiring decision.

Step 3: Place and Train Consumers

Upon receiving a positive hiring decision, several activities occurred. First, the job coach assigned to the project spent several hours at the business learning the job duties and developing task analyses.

Second,the first supported employee toured the business, met the department head and staff and had a "supported interview." The students gave the employer their "resume" describing the student, his/her living situation, interests, previous work experiences and information for co-workers about him or her. This was done to show the department that the students were "real people" and to give them information that would lead to social interactions.

Third, presentations were made to departmental staff. At the presentation, supported employment was described, along with its benefits to businesses, and the rationale for placing a person in that department. A short videotape on supported

employment was shown, staff discussed the student to be placed and introduced the job coach. Social interactions were encouraged. Also discussed was how co-workers might help the candidate become an integral member of their work unit.

Fourth, the student was trained on the necessary duties. Typically, skills were trained in a total-cycle fashion, using modeling and a least-to-most prompt correction procedure hierarchy. For more capable students, instruction focused on several job duties concurrently. For those who needed more intensive instruction, one job task was trained to criterion before introducing subsequent duties.

Step 4: Follow-Along/Fade Job Coach Support

Follow-along and fading job coach supports by introducing natural co-worker supports was the final step in the DHP project process. To accomplish this, the job coach first organized a support schedule allowing him/her to provide the level of assistance needed for each consumer.

Second, co-worker advocates were identified who could provide natural supports. The job coach then provided a combination of direct consumer support coupled with consultation to the co-worker advocates. In some cases, generally involving persons with less intense support needs, the job coach solely provided consultation.

Third, the job coach worked with staff to help solve problems in behavior or performance, identify new duties and/or encourage greater integration. For example, when it was noted that all supported employees took breaks together, the job coach suggested that a co-worker might ask a consumer to join her on break and the coach encouraged the consumer to take breaks with her departmental colleagues. Within two months, this person took most of her breaks with her co-workers. As another example, the job coach provided a digital counter for the student to keep track of her work output, freeing co-workers from this responsibility.

Job coach support has not yet been completely faded at DHP sites. Job coach time has, however, been reduced at several sites so that coaching is not required throughout the work shift. Further, the type of support has changed from consumer-directed to a combination of direct consumer support and staff consultation.

DHP Examples

Two examples of DHP sites currently in operation are presented below. These sites include the corporate headquarters of the American College Testing program (ACT) in Iowa City and Mercy Medical Center in Cedar Rapids. These sites were selected because they illustrate placement in non-traditional clerical/professional settings (ACT) as well as more traditional food service/housekeeping settings (Mercy Medical Center).

Example #1: American College Testing (ACT)

ACT hired four students across three departments. Of the four, one student had mild mental retardation, two had moderate mental retardation, and one student has severe mental retardation. Each student, their department and duties are described below.

"Lana was a high school senior in a classroom for students with mild mental retardation. She had fourth to fifth grade reading and writing skills and learned most jobs relatively quickly. Lana was a highly social individual, but a times was unaware of the social cues to stop talking and resume working. Lana needed a challenging job involving higher-level skills. She had worked at a grocery store, hospital, nursing home, and retail store but wanted a clerical position.

Lana, was employed in ACT's Information Systems Division (ISD), the computer center of the organization. Lana's job was to remove printouts and disperse them to the programers' mailboxes. After delivering the printouts, she checked a bin for any change requests, delivered them to the ISD staff. Lana also

operated a bursting machine to separate documents. She ran errands for the department, helped with counting inventory, and performed a variety of miscellaneous duties asked of her.

"Loretta" was a high school senior in a class for students with moderate mental retardation. Loretta had cerebral palsy and used Canadian crutches. Her overall health and stamina were weak, averaging one sick day per week due to illness. Because of her physical disability, she needed a job that would allow her to sit as much of the time. She was a quiet, shy individual, who only interacted on occasion. She followed time schedules, used money independently, and wrote legibly, but had limited spelling and reading skills. Loretta had had work experiences at a coffee shop, grocery store, day care, hotel, and in a clerical setting. She wanted to work in an office setting in which she could wear nice clothing.

Loretta was hired in the Financial Aids Department, processing student aid forms/statements. This report, called a CFAR, or Comprehensive Financial Aid Report, indicated the type and amount of aid a student was eligible to receive. Loretta's job was to prepare these reports for mailing. She compared the name and address on the CFAR to that on the mailing label, placed the CFAR and two other informational sheets into an envelope in a particular order and placed the mailing label on the front of the envelope. She was responsible for keeping track of the number of CFARs she completed in a day. Within four months, her supervisor decided to expand her duties. She began to check applications to insure that all necessary materials were included and marked on the application envelope.

The other student with moderate mental retardation was "Susan", a young woman with Down Syndrome. Susan could handle a medium work load and also worked best when sitting. She had been known to complain often of headaches, stomach aches, and tiredness. Susan worked at a slow to steady pace and was reported to lack motivation and initiative. Susan occasionally interacted with co-

workers, often keeping her head down and speaking softly. She had an extensive sight word vocabulary, could copy written material, but had limited spelling skills. Susan was generally neat and clean and enjoyed wearing nice clothes. Prior work experience included a dry cleaning store, restaurant, motel, grocery store, and child care facility. She had no strong preferences concerning type of work, but did state that she did not want to clean.

The Publications Department in which Susan worked produced all of the ACT's written material and brochures. Susan served as a general office/clerical assistant. She was responsible for duties such as breaking down file folders, color categorizing departmental lists for filing purposes, delivering materials to other departments, running errands, sharpening pencils, photocopying, and any other miscellaneous duties that needed to be done. Her duties changed quite frequently, which Susan enjoyed and was able to handle.

"Tina" was a high school junior in a classroom for students with severe/profound disabilities. Tina was capable of light-to-medium work, and worked best if she was allowed to move around occasionally. She worked at a slow, steady pace but would leave the work area if left unattended. She spoke, but was difficult to understand and often repeated particular words and phrases out of context. Tina had several challenging behaviors, including high speech volume, swearing and rather loud belching and flatulence. Occasionally, Tina would hit her classmates, particularly when they were being disciplined by an authority figure. Tina recognized a few sight words, but did not tell time or count money. Tina had had work experiences at a grocery store and at a hospital and on various in-school jobs such as folding, stapling, collating, filling pop machines, and folding towels. Tina seemed to work best when given a small, consistent set of routine tasks requiring few judgments.

Tina also was placed in the Financial Aids department. Staff determined that at least one step in the CFAR process could be isolated and assigned to Tina. She had had previous experience placing labels on envelopes at school, so this became her responsibility. Her teacher developed a cardboard jig to help her place the labels on the envelopes in the correct location and orientation. A co-worker took the jig home and had her husband build a sturdier, wooden jig for Tina's use. An electric label peeler also was purchased jointly by ACT and the Iowa Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services for her use. To provide some variety, Tina also was assigned a duty termed "flapping" in which she bent back the flaps of mailing envelopes to speed up the material insertion process.

The ACT site was initiated in February of 1991 when Lana began working in ISD. Lana was hired for 20 hours per week at $5.00 per hour. Lana required very little training to learn her assigned duties, within two weeks showing nearly error-free performance. Minimal coaching was required until Lana graduated from high school. At that point, she began to bring food into the work area, to call in to work ill and to leave early due to "illness". Lana and her supervisor had a meeting to discuss these concerns and ACT's expectations. Also, since the job coach was already on premises, she began to "drop in" unannounced on Lana approximately three times during each hour shift. After approximately six weeks, the frequency was reduced, ultimately to once per shift. Finally, the supervisor identified "filler duties" for use during down time. The result of these interventions has been improved work performance.

Loretta learned her duties quite quickly. Within two weeks, she no longer required ongoing prompting by the coach. Loretta did require some assistance in setting up her work station and replenishing necessary supplies. As time went on, co-workers assisted her in this function. Her productivity and wages increased

substantially; from 50% ($2.50/her) initially to 85% ($4.25/hour) within four months.

As indicated above, Loretta has made noticeable progress. Recognizing this, ACT staff assigned and taught her other tasks. Further, her hours were increased from 10 to 25 per week once she graduated. Loretta was viewed as a valued colleague. Unfortunately, she resigned following one year of employment, to stay at home with her family. ACT did hire another person with disabilities to take her place.

Susan was hired to work in the Publications Department in March, 1991. Initially, her job was to break down and assemble files and stamp certain forms as required. Susan was hired for 10 hours each week, and her initial productivity rate was 50%, or $2.50/hr. At first, job coach intervention time was predicted to be at a greater frequency than what was required for Loretta. However, Katherine, a strong co-worker advocate, took an immediate interest in Susan. Katherine was given functional supervision of any work assigned to Susan, and they soon became close friends as well as colleagues. Susan demonstrated a great deal of adaptability in her ability to perform a variety of tasks, so on any given day, she performs up to six different and distinct jobs in her department. Her hours of work were increased to 15 hours per week. She is well liked by her colleagues. She takes breaks and lunch with them. He co-workers hosted a high school graduation party for her, each bringing treats, their own high school photos and contributing to a graduation gift.

Relatively few problems have emerged during the time Susan has been employed. Most notable is when Susan was found sleeping at her desk during work time. After interventions by project staff were not effective, her formal supervisor confronted her about the problem, discussed why it was happening and explained the consequences of continued sleeping on the job. As a result of this discussion, Susan goes to bed at an earlier hour and has not had a problem with staying awake

at work. Recently, Katherine left ACT to enter a job coach training program.. Another co-worker advocate has taken Katherine's place and has assumed functional supervision.

Tina Worked in the Financial Aid Department 10 hours each week, beginning in April, of 1991. Tina had more severe disabilities than Laura and seemed less well received by some of her co-workers. With the adaptations provided by the label peeler and jig, Tina was able to perform her work tasks quite well. She needed more frequent support, however, to stay on-task, not wander and not to talk loudly, belch or pass gas. Since much of her challenging behavior seemed unpredictable, the job coach found it necessary to remain in the immediate work area. Upon completion of the school year, Tina's hours were increased to 15 per week. Primarily due to the adaptations, her productivity increased from the initial 10% productivity level to a 25% level, or $1.25/hr. She had a number of co-workers who enjoyed and supported her. However, some co-workers found her unusual mannerisms to be unpleasant. Unfortunately, after nearly six months of employment, Tina was fired for striking a co-worker. Despite ACT's interest in reasonable accommodations, their personnel policy calling for immediate termination in like incidents resulted in Tina's dismissal.

Overall, the level of support provided by ACT has been quite good. All students are direct hires by the company, with a sub-minimum wage certificate obtained by ACT through the U.S. Department of Labor. Co-workers show an interest in the employees. They participate in all work-related functions, including on-site parties and off-site company picnics. Any problems that were encountered were handled "as routine business," and the level of suppor: remains high at this writing.

Example #2: Mercy Medical Center

The Mercy Medical Center site was developed as follows. DHP staff contacted Mercy Medical Center's President and met with him the Director of Human Resources and the Director of Marketing. At this meeting, grant concept was described along with how it could benefit Mercy Medical Center. A meeting was suggested with heads of departments with entry level personnel needs (e.g. laundry, medical records, housekeeping, food preparation, dishwashing) to explore possibilities for mutual benefit. A presentation was made to the heads of housekeeping, dietary, cafeteria, kitchen, and laundry departments describing the benefits of supported employment to their departments. Department heads were surveyed as to areas of need/perceived benefit (e.g. reducing turnover, reducing hiring, training and supervision demands). At the conclusion of this meeting individual appointments were scheduled with each department to assess their specific labor needs.

Each department was surveyed, with staff noting the current job responsibilities, necessary tasks that were difficult to complete, and tasks that could be redistributed to allow current employees to devote additional time to the more challenging job aspects. Each department, the positions created and assigned duties are described below.

A housekeeping assistant position was created. The duties included vacuuming carpets around elevators and entryways and cleaning the visitor's lounge.

A second position was created in the food preparation area. This person, a tray line assistant, sealed silverware in plastic bags, duties not always completed because of other staff responsibilities.

The third position was for a food wrapping assistant. This individual wrapped cookies, desserts, rolls and fruit in plastic bags and wrapped baked potatoes.

The final position was a dishwashing assistant. This person sorted silverware and bowls from clean tray line and lined the patient trays with paper tray liners.

The students referred for these positions included one recent special education graduate with mild disabilities, two seniors in a class for students with moderate disabilities and one senior in a class for students with severe/profound disabilities. The students referred for the position at Mercy Medical Center were "Chad", "Lonnie", "Craig" and "Charlotte". Each is described below.

Chad had graduated from moderate disabilities program. His psychological test score placed him in the mild mental retardation range, but he benefitted from the functional life skills focus of the moderate program. Chad assumed the position of Housekeeping Assistant. Chad was a very capable young man who learned jobs quickly. He was able to learn building-wide routes required in this position. He could follow multiple step directions and perform multiple tasks in succession. Chris was socially outgoing and easy to talk to. He needed supervision, however, to stay on task, to report to work on time and to be responsible for work related articles such as keys to the storage area.

Chad was paid $4.25 per hour (then the minimum wage) and worked an average of 20 hours per week. He received training for one week and intermittent training and follow up on an on-going basis thereafter. Most of his supervision fell naturally to the actual supervisor of his shift.

Lonnie had a moderate disability and was a high school senior. She was hired for the tray line position, sealing silverware in plastic bags. After a period of time, Lonnie also began doing some of the food wrapping. Lonnie was quiet and shy. She was a conscientious worker. She liked tasks that did not involve complex judgments. She had a slow, but consistent work pace. Lonnie needed lengthier training and more external supervision than Chad. She was not independent in decision making situations such as when to arrive at work, how to get started on

task, when to quit or in using transportation to and from work. She received two weeks of full time training and on going supervision on a daily basis. The job coach faded from any skill-related supervision after the initial training, but continued to provide the daily prompts on decision making tasks. Lonnie was initially paid $1.14 per hour, based on a productivity level of almost 24%, and worked 10 hours per week.

Craig also was a high school senior in a class for students with moderate mental disabilities. Craig began working in the food wrapping position but moved to the dish room to assist in putting away clean dishes and lining trays after a short time. Craig was very capable of learning structured tasks and performing them well. His needs for supervision centered around his behavior. Craig would leave the work station and wander through the hospital if left completely unsupervised. He also was tempted by food which made the food wrapping position inappropriate. Craig also liked to play pranks on people, some of which could be dangerous such as when he placed Charlotte on an elevator and pushed the button. These pranks were not overly serious, but did indicate that Craig required more supervision. Therefore, he was moved to a new position in the dish room near Charlotte, so the job coach could keep closer track of his activity. Craig began at $1.85 per hour (43% productivity) and worked 10 hours per week. He had initial training for three weeks and ongoing supervision permanently.

Charlotte was a senior in a class for students with severe disabilities. While Charlotte has a severe mental disability, she was ambulatory and had the ability to sorting items by shape. She was hired as the dish room assistant. Her tasks included sorting the silverware and sorting the bowls according to size.

Charlotte required constant supervision and intermittent prompts to continue working. The job coach provided initial training and remained with Charlotte to

assist on an on going basis. Her starting wage was $.58 per hour, based on productivity of 9%. She worked 10 hours per week.

The DHP project has been in operation at Mercy Medical Center for one and one half years. Chad resigned from his position as Housekeeping Assistant and another person with a disability was hired. While he enjoyed his job initially, Chad so indicated a desire for more variety and more frequent opportunity for socialization. He now holds a job in a different business that offers him these opportunities. He was replaced by another person with mild disabilities.

The remaining three original DHP employees are still working at Mercy Medical Center. Charlotte, Craig and Lonnie all have received raises as a result of new time studies, increasing their productivity/wages to 24%/$1.55/hr, 68%/$2.93/hr and 79%/$3.36/hr, respectively.

Many natural supports have developed at this work site over a period of time. For example, the paratransit system that provides transportation for some of the students is not always reliable for drop off and pick up times. A front desk volunteer now watches for the students, supervises them until the appropriate time and escorts them to their work station when their shift begins.

All employees know the supported employees, call them by name and include them in their regular activities. They are invited to all Mercy employee functions such as the holiday parties and the company picnic.

Our current initiative is to increase the number of hours our employees at Mercy Medical Center work. While hours have not increased, they have been maintained despite recent hospital layoffs and hourly reductions. This, in our view, illustrates Mercy's commitment to supported employment. The relatively low wages earned by Charlotte have resulted in changes in the way we present the subminimum wage option to employers. Our proposals now present employers with four or five wage levels pegged to the prevailing wage for the job. Individual whose

productivity falls within a given productivity range will now be paid the high end wage (e.g., with a person whose productivity falls between 1% and 25% is paid 25% of the prevailing wage). This change offers persons with more severe disabilities a better starting wage, yet does not serve as a disincentive to employers for hiring persons whose productivity might be extremely low.

Summary

This paper presented a process for developing DHP sites and illustrated two sites currently in operation. Our experience suggests that the DHP model holds promise. Continued efforts to implement and evaluate DHP sites should yield information on how best to develop sites and the conditions under which this model is most feasible. While the results thus far seem positive, data collected over the next two project years will determine the effectiveness of this approach in expanding the supported employment options available to consumers and providers.

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TABLE 1

A Four-Step Process for Establishing Dispersed-Heterogeneous-Placement Supported Employment Sites

Step 1: Assess Consumers to Determine Job Interests, Skills and Support Needs

Step 2: Job Development

Step 3: Place and Train Consumers

Step 4: Follow-Along/Fade Job Coach Support

Source: Author

TABLE 2

Areas Assessed in Consumer Employment Profile

Availability	Social Interactions	Work Initiative
Mobility	Strength/Endurance	Functional Academics
Orientation	Communication	Adapting to Change
Work Rate	Grooming/Self Care	Health/Safety Concerns
Task Attention	Task Sequencing	Prompting Needs
Job Preferences	Challenging Behaviors	Previous Work History
Travel Skills	Job Task Proficiency	Family Support for Employment

Source: Author. Based on Moon et al., 1985.

III.

Incorporating Sales and Business Practices into Job Development in Supported Employment

Incorporating Sales and Business Practices into Job Development in Supported Employment

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Abstract

The basic premise of this paper is that a more business-like approach to job development, one that acknowledges the importance of meeting employer needs, is essential for growth in supported employment opportunities. Seven job development elements that incorporate sales and business practices are presented and illustrated. These elements are drawn from five years of job-development experience with large and small businesses, together with information from the professional literature. Future job development research needs also are suggested.

Incorporating Sales and Business Practices into Job Development in Supported Employment

Supported employment has experienced significant expansion within the past five years (Kregel, Shafer, Wehman, & West, 1989), with over 32,000 individuals with disabilities placed in that time period (Shafer, Revell, & Isbister, 1991). To date, supported employment has occurred primarily in smaller businesses (Goodall, Verstegen, & Nietupski, 1988; Vandergoot, 1986). While certain national franchises such as Pizza Hut (Zivolich, 1989) and Marriott Corporation (Marriott Foundation, 1990) have promoted supported employment in their corporations, and while a federally-sponsored Corporate Initiative (O'Neill & Hill, 1990) is underway to create demand for supported employment in larger businesses, agencies continue to need effective methods for promoting more wide-spread commitment to supported employment among employers.

Bellamy, Rhodes, Mank, and Albin (1988) have asked whether supported employment is a passing fad or a long lasting rehabilitation method. Clearly, if supported employment is to continue to grow and be maintained, agencies must develop effective methods for penetrating the business community and creating job opportunities (Mank, Buckley, & Rhodes, 1991). In our view, continued growth in community employment depends at least in part on how supported employment programs present themselves to employers. If programs present themselves as human service agencies; if programs perceive themselves, and in turn are perceived by employers, as radically different from the business community, long-term relationships with the employers may be difficult to achieve or maintain. Agencies should

recognize that success in penetrating the business community is dependent upon serving not only persons with disabilities but also community businesses (Como & Hagner, 1986; McLoughlin, Garner, & Callahan, 1987). That is, a two-client approach to job development, one that balances the interests of persons with disabilities and employers, is critical to the long-term viability of supported employment (Como & Hagner, 1986).

While the field is replete with information concerning services to clients with disabilities (e.g., Rusch, 1986, 1990), few sources are available to guide job developers in effectively serving employer clients (Culver, Spencer, & Gilner, 1990). The purpose of this paper is to provide information to job developers on working more effectively with employers. The strategies identified below are drawn from the authors' five years of experience in job development infused with information from recent literature in job development (e.g., Como & Hagner, 1986; McLoughlin et al., 1987) and sales/marketing (e.g., Estes, 1988; McCarthy & Perrealt, 1987). Our contention is that the appropriate use of certain sales and business practices will allow job developers to better meet employer needs and be more successful in job development.

Seven elements that incorporate sales and business practices are described below. These elements are intended to guide job developers as they approach employers.

Element 1: Research Businesses to Identify Personnel Needs/Problems

Often overlooked in the zeal to develop jobs is the research necessary to better understand particular businesses and industries. Specifically,

job developers should identify possible areas of need in which supported employment might benefit a given business. In that regard, supported employment can serve different businesses in different ways. It can meet employer needs for capable, reliable employees. It can save employers money through reduced turnover, reduced hiring, training and supervision costs,and work incentives. It can improve business efficiency by relieving highly skilled and highly paid staff from the entry-level duties that keep them from their more challenging responsibilities. Hiring supported employees may be viewed as contributing to a positive corporate image in the community. Still other businesses may see that supported employment agencies can help them identify and hire persons with disabilities to meet affirmative action commitments. Job developers who understand perceived needs of given businesses/industries, and the benefits that might be of interest, can explore those areas with employers and will have greater job development success (Nietupski & Verstegen, 1990).

Prior to contacting employers, job developers should research businesses or industries to determine personnel needs/problems that their service and clients might meet/solve. Sources of such information are cited in Table 1. Many of the written sources are available free of charge

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Insert Table 1 about here

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in public libraries. For example, prior to contacting a large national educational testing corporation, we obtained the annual report from the public library. From it we discovered that this company annually processed

several million test applications, completed tests and financial aid requests. We also noted that the number one Board goal for the next year was to increase diversity in its workforce. Acquaintances familiar with the operation indicated that there were peak production periods in which temporary employees were hired. Finally, other employers informed us that temporary employees were increasingly hard to find in our tight local labor market. As a result, we focused on the following areas in our discussions with this employer: a) performance of the entry level duties (e.g., envelope opening) that would allow other employees to focus on scoring tests and processing test requests/financial aid applications; b) securing employees to meet personnel shortages in peak volume periods; and c) carefully screening and recommending persons with disabilities to meet corporate affirmative action goals. The result was the eventual hiring of four part-time supported employees.

Table 2 lists needs we have ascertained in our work with a variety of industries. While avoiding overgeneralization to all cases, job developers might consider these as starting points for exploration with the employers.

Insert Table 2 about here

In addition to researching personnel needs, job developers should learn who heads/manages the business, an address and phone number, and convenient contact times. This information becomes important when making the initial contact, described in Strategy #3, and can be obtained in local

business directories, through the Chamber of Commerce or other business groups, the Yellow Pages, or calling the business.

Element 2: Define Services so Employers Understand Them and How They Might Benefit Their Business

Young, Rosati, and Vandergoot (1986) report widespread employer confusion about the services offered by rehabilitation/supported employment agencies. Our own experience has been that employers often do not see how human service agencies can assist their business. Since it has been suggested that the first 30 seconds are critical in gaining employer interest (Estes, 1988; Nietupski & Verstegen, 1990), job developers should define their service so employers understand how it relates to their businesses. For example, stating one's affiliation with an employment agency, rather than a rehabilitation agency, allows employers to see that a job developer offers personnel resources. As one human resource director recently stated, "If you tell me you're with a supported employment agency, I don't know what you're talking about. For all I know, you could be offering athletic supporters to my employees!"

Once supported employment services are defined in terms employers understand, it is important to state the benefits this service offers (Estes, 1988). It is estimated that employers are approached by 10-20 sales people per week (Nietupski & Verstegen, 1990). Given their busy schedules, why should employers listen to a job developer? Estes suggests that employers are more likely to listen if they recognize benefits to their businesses. Thus, she emphasizes the need for "salespeople" to carefully craft a benefit statement to pique the interest of the listener.

It is at this point that previous research comes in to play. If a job developer understands the personnel needs/problems in a given business, s/he can highlight two or three top benefits to gain the employer's interest. For example, knowing that a particular restaurant in a university community was experiencing high turnover and absenteeism at the end-of-semester exam period, particularly on the day shift, a job developer presented herself as follows:

> I'm _____, an employment consultant with Personnel Resources. Our employment agency places people with disabilities in entry level, part time positions in area businesses. We specialize in saving employers the high cost associated with staff turnover and absenteeism by offering reliable workers and professional training and supervision. I'd like to meet to discuss whether our services might meet your personnel needs. Would either next Thursday at 10:00 a.m. or 2:00 p.m. be convenient?

In the above example, the job developer tailored her message to what she learned were problems experienced by the manager. Because she was perceived as benefitting the business by offering a solution to this employer's personnel problem, she obtained the requested appointment.

To maximize the effectiveness of the initial 30 seconds with employers, we suggest that job developers write out and practice "scripts" that define their service and reference several key benefits. The benefits, of course, will vary based on the needs of a particular business. By practicing these scripts, job developers will become more fluid and natural in describing their service.

Element 3: Select Initial Contact Methods Most Likely to Succeed With a Given Business

Armed with information about a company and a prepared service-benefits description, job developers are ready for the initial employer contact. It is important to remember the purpose of the initial contact: simply to obtain an appointment to learn about the business (McLoughlin et al. 1987); not to "sell" your services or "close a deal." Therefore, when contacting employers, job developers need only, a) define their service; b) mention the two or three anticipated benefits; and c) request an appointment to discuss personnel needs and their service. To go into great detail over the features of supported employment or to attempt to obtain a job at this point would be inappropriate. This is so for several reasons. First, job developers cannot position themselves as consultants to businesses if, prior to learning about the business, they attempt to "get a sale." Credibility comes through demonstrating an ability to help the business (Estes, 1988). One can only help a business after needs are identified. Second, giving too much information at this juncture can only give employers a reason to say no to an appointment request. Employers frequently contacted by salespersons protect their time by screening callers. One way to screen is to obtain sufficient information to uncover an objection that allows for a graceful way out. So, for example, if job coaching is described in great detail at the initial contact, an employer might say no to an appointment request because s/he believes her/his tight work space would not accommodate a job coach. Since a job developer has not even toured the work area, s/he is in no position to respond and may

miss out on the appointment. Thus, a job developer should present only the essence of one's service and request an appointment to discuss employer needs and this service in greater detail.

There are several initial contact methods open to job developers. The potential strengths and weaknesses of each are described in Table 3.

Insert Table 3 about here

In general, personal contact, phone contact and letter-phone contact represent a less-formal to more-formal hierarchy. Personal contact is recommended under the following conditions: a) the business is very small and/or informal; b) the job developer has a personal relationship with the employer; c) the employer serves the public and/or is in public view, such as a print shop manager who takes print orders from walk-in customers; or d) in rural areas where personal contact might be the norm. Never use personal contact when approaching a larger business or when a receptionist screens visitors (McLoughlin et al., 1987). In such cases, job developers may be less effective and may, in fact, lose credibility.

Phone contact generally is acceptable for all but the largest or most formal businesses. It is particularly appropriate when agencies have name recognition for the quality of their personnel service. Job developers confident of their phone skills and able to use the phone fluidly should consider its use because of its time/cost savings features.

Letter-phone combinations are well suited for larger businesses and when an agency's services are not well known. This approach is considered

quite professional (McLoughlin, et al., 1987) and can enhance an agency's businesslike image. Further, when receptionists screen calls, an advantage of having sent a letter is that job developers can indicate that "Ms./Mr. _(employer)__ is expecting my call." Such a statement is accurate if the letter indicates a call will be forthcoming and has often allowed job developers to get past "the gatekeeper"--a time-honored role played by many receptionists. To make initial contacts more likely to result in an appointment, several suggestions are presented in Table 4.

Insert Table 4 about here

Element 4: Be Prepared to Handle Objections

Often initial contacts may lead to appointments quite easily. However, employers may guard their precious time by offering objections in the hopes of avoiding another meeting. Objections can take many forms. They may appear innocently as requests for more information. "Tell me more about your service." or, "What kinds of disabilities are you talking about?" Other times, employers will request a delay. "Sounds interesting, but this is a busy time. I'll get back to you once we get our new equipment installed." On occasion, objections are quite clearly stated: "This is a very fast-paced, stressful work environment. What makes you think a retarded person could do this work?" or "We have strict OSHA requirements that I'm sure your people couldn't meet. We wouldn't want to be liable for accidents." These questions or outright objections can lead to lengthy discussions that either provide the employer a reason not to

meet or side track job developers from their goal of obtaining an appointment.

A key to successful job development is handling objections (Estes, 1988). McLoughlin et al. (1987) suggested that job developers follow a three-part process when faced with objections. First, acknowledge the objection: "You raise a good point, work pace and stress are important considerations in finding the right person for a job." Second, provide partial information to show your responsiveness to the employer and his/her concerns: "Before we recommend an employee, we would want to make sure s/he could handle the work pace." Third, return to the request for appointment, but indicate that, should s/he grant an appointment, you would be able to provide more information. For example: "If I could get 25 minutes of your time to learn about your business, I could learn whether any of our workers could handle your work pace."

These three steps communicate two important messages from the job developer. First, that s/he is listening and takes their concerns seriously; second, and perhaps more importantly, that s/he believes in the value of his/her service--a service certainly worth 25 minutes of an employer's time. In essence, the job developer is saying that s/he needs information from the employer to do her/his job. If the employer will not give you that time, a relatively small price to pay in light of the valuable benefits offered, then there is little reason to proceed further. By communicating this message in a positive and professional manner, job developers may engender greater respect for what they do, and a willingness by employers to acknowledge that respect by giving their time.

In addition to the three steps listed above, the following ideas may be considered in handling objections:

1. Anticipate possible objections--did your research or past experience alert you to likely questions/objections?
2. Brainstorm possible responses to questions/objections with other job developers.
3. Keep a list of typical objections and responses and review them periodically.
4. Admit when you cannot answer a question--but indicate that by the time you meet you will have an answer or that you may have an answer once you learn the specifics about his/her business.
5. Always be polite, never get angry, even if you feel justified in so doing.
6. Be persistent and do not be sidetracked from your goal--getting an appointment.

Element 5: Develop Tools for Effectively Reaching Employers

Job developers need tools to effectively work with employers. Some tools simply serve to reinforce the business image job developers should strive to create. For example, personalized business cards are a must in most medium-size and larger businesses, particularly in urban areas. Use of a briefcase and dressing in a manner consistent with that in a given business represent two other examples of tools that can reinforce the perception of a peer relationship.

Other tools include media/materials used to introduce, describe or illustrate your service. These include introductory letters, brochures and

media such as photographs, videotapes and slides. Such tools can enhance job development efforts if carefully designed and appropriately used. Often, feedback from employers or marketing specialists in local businesses can serve to improve the quality/effectiveness of an agency's marketing materials (Venne, 1990). Suggestions regarding each of these tools are presented in Table 5.

Insert Table 5 about here

These tools can be used in several ways. For example, brochures/fact sheets can accompany the initial contact letter. Videos, fact sheets, and testimonials can be given to the employer as a "leave behind" at the initial meeting. The added benefit to leave behinds is that they provide a reason for continued contact. Brochures and videos can be effective in business group presentations (e.g., Rotary Clubs) if they are brief and interesting.

Element #6: Survey Employers at the Initial Appointment to Learn About Their Business, Personnel Needs and Perceived Benefits

Perhaps no step is more important in job development than the first appointment with an employer (Nietupski & Verstegen, 1990). It is here that job developers learn about a business, employer motivations, and the likelihood of a mutually beneficial relationship (Spiro, Perrealt, & Reynolds, 1977). Such information is gained only if job developers ask the right questions and listen carefully. This information generally will not

be obtained if the job developer does all the talking, and/or if s/he tries to "sell" employers on a placement without first learning about their needs (McCarthy & Perrealt, 1988).

The goal of the initial, or survey, appointment is to determine the conditions under which an employer might hire a supported employee. The meeting consists of three parts. In the introduction, the job developer should define her/his service, reiterate the top two or three potential benefits, and indicate the purpose of the meeting: to learn about the needs of the business and whether supported employment might be of benefit.

The second part involves questions pertaining to the business and the areas of need/benefit as perceived by the employer. Table 6 illustrates questions that might be asked at a survey appointment. Two things should

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Insert Table 6 about here

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be noted about these questions. First, not all questions might be asked at a given appointment. Generally, job developers should be prepared to probe those areas which initial research indicated might be important to a business (e.g., see Table 2). Second, once an employer shows an interest in an area (e.g., comments upon high turnover in her mail room) job developers should "trial close" by asking whether service in that area would benefit the business (e.g., "Would it benefit your organization if we could reduce turnover in the mail room?"). This trial close is important because it verifies areas of importance to an employer and whether there is a basis for serving a particular business.

The third part of the survey meeting involves determining the hiring process, arranging a tour of the work areas and setting an appointment to present findings and obtain a yes/no hiring decision. Job developers need to know who makes hiring decisions. If the employer states that supervisors participate in hiring decisions, the job developer should survey the supervisors and involve them in the presentation/decision meeting. This is necessary because the concerns of all decision makers must be addressed in order to expedite a decision. To not survey these individuals may delay the decision or, worse, may result in your contact "running it by" the other staff members him or herself. This is problematic in that it may not allow the job developer to uncover and respond to objections others may have.

Prior to leaving the survey appointment, the job developer should tour the operation, if convenient for the employer, or arrange a subsequent tour. The tour will give the job developer the specific task/job site information necessary to determine if client capabilities/interests match job site demands.

Finally, before leaving the meeting, the job developer should set a date to present her/his findings t the decision makers. In so doing, it is important to verify that if the job developer will give a proposal, the employer will render a yes or no hiring decision. This date setting and verification is important for two reasons. First, it insures access to the decision makers. Too often, job developers leave a survey and play "phone tag" with employers trying to get back in. If this persists, momentum is lost and all one's survey work may be wasted. Second, it communicates the

willingness to conduct research and work on behalf of the employer client if s/he is willing to give an honest answer. That is, it communicates that job developer time is valuable and that an honest opinion/decision will save both the employer and job developer precious time.

Several suggestions for making the survey appointment fluid and productive are cited in Table 7. These suggestions, drawn from our experiences and recommendations from the professional literature (e.g., McLoughlin et al., 1987) should maximize employer comfort and information sharing and allow job developers to determine whether employers perceive their service as benefitting his or her enterprise. Clearly, the more areas in which employers acknowledges benefit/need, the more likely the prospects for a positive hiring decision.

Insert Table 7 about here

Element #7: Develop and Present Proposals Based on Employer-acknowleged Benefits

Armed with information about the business and whether an appropriate job match exists, job developers should be ready to obtain a hiring decision. In sales jargon, this step is referred to as "closing the deal."

While proposal meetings can be formal or informal, it is best to structure them in a particular sequence. First, job developers should indicate that the purpose of the meeting is to present her/his findings relative to a company's personnel needs and receive a yes or no hiring decision. This serves as a reminder that the job developer has conducted

research on the employer's behalf, and, in return, is to receive a decision.

Second, the job developer should review the two or three top benefits uncovered during the survey appointment and, most importantly, ask for verification that the employer views these as benefits (Estes, 1988). This step, known as a "trial close," is very important since employer-acknowleged benefits form the basis for a positive hiring decision. If a key benefit is not acknowledged, the job developer should probe this further. For example, we once proposed creation of a bank assistant position. The supported employee in this position would microfilm checks, shred paper and stock teller windows to free tellers to provide more customer service. When asked at the proposal meeting whether freeing tellers of such duties would be a benefit by increasing customer service, the employer hesitated. When probed further, he indicated that he was not certain whether tellers were pulled away from their windows sufficiently by these duties. At that point, two suggestions were made. One was to conduct a time study of the operation to verify the time spent away from the windows performing these duties. The second was another "trial close" in the form of, "If tellers are away from the windows for 10% - 20% of their time, would you agree that freeing them from these duties would be beneficial?" Upon an affirmative answer, the presentation continued, another site observation was arranged and another meeting scheduled to present findings and receive a decision.

Once benefits are acknowleged, proposed duties for supported employees should be reviewed and "trial closed" -- "Are these the duties that will

free up staff and take care of the turnover problem in your mail room?" Again, if there is a concern, job developers should probe to determine what modifications would satisfy the employer.

Fourth, job developers now can describe specific candidate(s) recommended for the agreed-upon duties. In particular, the job developer should express the qualifications of the proposed candidate relative to job demands, past experiences of candidate, support needs and other relevant information. Again, employer acknowlegement that this candidate seems suited for the job should be sought. If not, an interview with the client or offer to put the employer in contact with a previous supervisor might be made with verification that, if the outcome is positive, the individual would be hired.

Once steps one through four are completed successfully, the job developer can ask for the decision. She/he might do so as follows:

> Since we are in agreement that freeing your tellers can improve customer service and reduce overtime, and since these duties will allow you to achieve these benefits, and since Mary Smith looks like a good candidate for this position, is there any reason not to start her out next Monday?

This "close" builds upon the trial closes obtained earlier and requests a decision. At this point, the job developer should wait for a decision. It is now up to the employer to say yes or no to the proposal.

Generally, if trial closes have been acknowleged, the decision should be to hire. Occasionally, however, an employer will say yes all the way through the presentation, but not when asked to render a hiring decision.

Should this happen, job developers need to pinpoint the area(s) of concern: benefits? job duties? candidate? starting date/hours? other? If the concern(s) seems legitimate, the job developer should ask an "If" question. For example, "It seems like you are concerned about how your tellers will react to this candidate. Perhaps we could make a brief presentation to your staff. If we can address their concerns at that time, would you be willing to proceed?"

Occasionally, the concerns cannot be resolved or are nebulous and difficult to ascertain. If the job developer believes that the employer is simply reluctant to hire but cannot honestly say no, s/he might raise this possibility, perhaps reminding the employer that either a yes or a no decision was acceptable. If the employer is not forthcoming, the job developer may wish to politely break off negotiations until the employer is willing to make a decision.

If the employer decides not to hire, the job developer might probe for the reason. Doing so might either allow one to address the objection or to better prepare for similar circumstances in the future.

The presentation described above allows the job developer to utilize the information gathered, communicate that s/he has worked diligently on behalf of the business and to efficiently obtain a hiring decision. Should a written proposal be used, an added benefit is the clear understanding regarding the responsibilities of the supported employee, employer and agency. Our experience has been that written agreements lead to fewer misunderstandings among these parties and to a more successful relationship with the employer.

Future Research Needs

The seven elements described above are drawn from a combination of personal experience and information from the sales/marketing and supported employment literature. Because the application of these elements to the supported employment job development process is relatively recent, much research is needed.

Several areas of inquiry might result in further empirical support for these elements. First, survey research might be conducted to determine the specific benefits likely to be of interest to particular types of businesses. These findings could result in the crafting of more effective benefit statements and greater success in gaining survey appointments within various industries.

Second, the approach suggested here might be validated through employer feedback. That is, the key elements of this job development process, perhaps contrasted with a more "human service" approach, might be presented to a broad array of employers. Employer feedback as to the acceptability of the approach(es) can socially validate the basic model presented here.

Third, data are needed regarding the percentage of contacts yielding surveys, the percentage of surveys yielding proposal presentations and the percentage of proposal presentations resulting in an affirmative hiring decision. Sales representatives compile such statistics to guide their sales efforts (Estes, 1988). These data provide them with: a) guidelines/ standards for level of activity needed to achieve a sale; and b) areas in which improvement can be made (e.g., achieving higher percentages of survey

appointments by improving initial contact techniques). Such standards are not generally available to job developers and could be extremely helpful.

Fourth, research into the type of objections encountered in various industries, and effective ways of handling those objections is needed. Clearly, in both sales (McCarthy & Perrealt, 1987) and job development (McLoughlin et al., 1987), handling objections is the essence of closing a sale/achieving a placement. Knowledge of the objections likely to be encountered and effective responses may better prepare job developers for negotiating with employers.

Summary

Successful job development requires a close working relationship with employers. In essence, business people must come to view job developers as consultants to their company (Estes, 1988). The seven elements described above, when combined with astute observations and effective interpersonal skills, can demonstrate job developer concern for serving the employer. Job developers who learn about a business and its needs, present themselves as professionals, help employers understand the nature of their services and carefully demonstrate how supported employees can help a business achieve its objectives, should experience greater success in creating job opportunities for consumers and in serving the business community.

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Table 1

Sources of Information on Personnel Problems/Needs

Corporate publications (e.g., annual reports)
Industry trade publications
Manpower reports from national/state/local economic development agencies
Business/corporate loan officers
Chamber of Commerce, Job Service, or Economic Development staff
Business newspapers/sections
Observation of retail establishments as a customer
Discussions with acquaintances employed in a given company
Previous work experience in an industry/business

Table 2

Potential Personnel Needs/Problems in Selected Industries

Industry	Problem/Needs
1. Food service	1a. Costs associated with turnover, absenteeism
	1b. Disinterest in the job by the predominantly younger workforce
	1c. Employee shortages
2. Financial institutions/ insurance companies	2a. Efficiency--relieving tellers, loan officers, service representatives, etc., of the filing, envelope stuffing, copying and stocking duties that interfere with customer service
	2b. Community image--many institutions pride themselves in serving the entire community and taking the lead in particular initiatives
	2c. Quality work--concentrating on duties that, while repetitive, must be performed accurately (e.g., placing a given number of dollar bills in sleeve wrappers)
3. Retail sales	3a. Maximizing customer contact (sales and service)
	3b. Costs associated with turnover and absenteeism
4. Manufacturing	4a. Sourcing employees during peak production periods
	4b. Cutting costs associated with subcontracting or use of temporary employment agencies
5. Larger corporations, companies with government contracts	5a. Meeting Affirmative Action commitments
	5b. Workforce efficiency (see 2a)

Table 3

Strengths and Weaknesses of Four Different Initial Contact Methods

Method	Possible Strengths	Possible Weaknesses
1. Personal contact	1a. More difficult for employers to say no	1a. Too informal in larger businesses
		1b. Time consuming if travel involved and employer not available
2. Phone contact	2a. Time saving	2a. Easier for employers to say no
	2b. Low cost	2b. Requires confident, effective phone communication skills
	2c. Accepted business/sales practice	2c. Service /benefits easily forgotten
3. Letter plus phone contact	3a. Professional image	3a. Can be time consuming
	3b. Allows specification of benefits	3b. May be too formal for a particular business
	3c. Concrete reference may stick in employer's mind	
	3d. Useful when service is not widely recognized	
	3e. Preferred business practice	

Table 4

Suggestions for Successful Initial Contacts

1.	Be prepared--script/practice your message.
2.	Define your service and key benefits.
3.	Refer to your letter if one was sent.
4.	Offer two appointment dates rather than asking a yes/no question (e.g., "Could we meet to discuss this?").
5.	Have your calendar ready to select a different date/time if necessary.
6.	Request a brief appointment (e.g., 25 minutes) and stick to it when you do meet.
7.	Call/drop in at a less busy time (e.g., mid AM/PM in food service; generally not just prior to lunch break or closing time; typically not Friday PM).
8.	Don't do all the talking. Ask for the appointment and wait for the employer to respond.
9.	Remember your goal: to get an appointment.
10.	Avoid human service jargon.
11.	Speak as naturally as possible.
12.	Be brief.

Table 5

Tools for Use in Job Development

Business cards

1. Your name and title printed, not handwritten or typed.
2. Uncluttered
3. Phone number and FAX number if available.

Introductory letters

1. One page in length.
2. Three paragraph format: a) description of service; b) key benefits; c) indication that you will call to set an appointment.
3. Original (not photocopy) letter and actual signature.
4. Tailor letter to a given business by emphasizing benefits for that type of business. Have several forms in computer files.
5. Use business terms, not human service jargon.
6. Use emphatic verbs (e.g., "We reduce your turnover." not "We may assist you in possibly reducing turnover.").

Follow-up letters

1. Can be used as appointment reminders or as a thank you following appointments.
2. Brief, to the point.

Brochures

1. Highlight benefits.
2. Brief--key points bulleted, minimal text.
3. Quality layout, paper and printing. A poor brochure is worse than none at all.
4. Phone numbers to call for more information.

Table 5 (continued)

5. Testimonial statements from employers regarding their experience with supported employment.

6. Business terminology.

Fact sheets

1. May be substituted for brochure.

2. Defines/describes service and benefits.

3. Lists businesses using the service, contact persons and phone numbers.

4. Describe the positions filled.

5. May include testimonial statements.

Testimonial letters

1. Letters from respected/recognized company officers.

2. Brief letter citing specific benefits/positive experiences.

3. Not just "blue sky"--honest indication of concerns, and how agency worked to address concerns.

4. Use variety of types of businesses (e.g., manufacturing, financial institutions, retail, food service, health care).

Video tapes

1. Brief -- 5-10 minutes.

2. Highlight 2-3 benefits.

3. Combination of client action sections and employer interviews.

4. Quality sound and lighting.

5. Call to action (e.g., "For more information...").

Table 6

Possible Employer Survey Questions

1.	Tell me about your business--the work areas and the duties performed by employees in those areas.
2.	Are there duties current staff cannot complete or that keep staff from performing the most critical/challenging duties?
*3.	Would it be of benefit if our clients could assume those duties and free your current staff?
4.	In which positions are you experiencing the greatest turnover (or absenteeism)?
*5.	Would it benefit your organization if we could reduce that turnover/increase reliable attendance?
6.	Describe the training and supervision provided to new hirees.
*7.	Would it save you business time and money if we could assume training and supervision responsibilities?
8.	Is it difficult for company to find qualified persons with disabilities to meet its' commitment to affirmative action?
*9.	Would it benefit you if we could help you meet this commitment by referring qualified applicants for particular positions?
10.	Is community image important to your company?
*11.	Would hiring of persons with disabilities contribute to a positive community image?
12.	Are you familiar with tax incentives for hiring persons with disabilities?
*13.	Would it benefit your company to access the tax savings available to companies that hire workers with disabilities?
*14.	Would you view the employment of persons with disabilities as benefiting the community as a whole by allowing them to contribute their talents to society and helping them become less reliant upon public assistance?

*Trial closes: verifying employer-perceived benefits

Table 7

Suggestions for Making the Survey Appointment More Fluid and Productive

1. Begin the meeting with brief conversation about the business, employer interest areas, etc., to set a positive tone.

2. Be prepared to intersperse relevant personal experience information into the conversation when appropriate.

3. Ask open-ended questions rather than simply yes/no questions (e.g., "Tell me about the areas in which turnover is the highest.").

4. Use lead-in questions to introduce sensitive areas (e.g., "Fran Smith from Merchants Bank indicates that her tellers cannot serve customers while performing microfilming and coin rolling duties. What duties have your staff found difficult to complete?").

5. Determine employer motivations:
   a. to save money
   b. to solve a nagging problem
   c. recognition within/outside the company
   d. pioneering -- being an innovator
   e. contribution to/helping others

6. Show interest, flexibility and a willingness to work with the employer to serve the business.

7. As for clarification (e.g., paraphrase and ask if your perceptions are correct).

IV.

Leveraging Community Support in Approaching Employers: The Referral Model of Job Development

Leveraging Community Support in Approaching Employers: The Referral Model of Job Development

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Introductory Vignette

It is 4:30 p.m. on Friday afternoon, and Janice, the job developer and manager of the rehabilitation agency's Supported Employment program, is about to close up shop for the week. Prior to leaving the office, she checks her calendar for the following week one last time. She wants to make sure she's prepared for the work she must accomplish in the next few days.

As she goes through her calendar, she realizes that she has just completed her second year as Supported Employment job developer and manager. It has been a good two years--for her, the program, and her consumers: the persons with disabilities she serves. As she locks the agency door and walks to her car, she reflects on the progress made in the past two years and the work that still needs to be done. Her agency has placed almost two-thirds of its consumers into community jobs and is well on its way to placing the remaining consumers into integrated community- or agency-operated businesses. While the challenges of serving individuals with more severe disabilities are great, including finding a broader range of jobs for consumers, particularly those with mental illness, and developing cost-effective supported employment services, she is encouraged about the future. As she gets into her car, she realizes that her job is made easier by the community support she and her agency have developed. She recalls

how her placement this past week came about through a referral from one of her employers to a business acquaintance of his. She also is encouraged because one of the advocates she works with called this afternoon to say that he had arranged a meeting with the director of a large advertising and printing firm. The advocate, an acquaintance who was on the agency board, felt that the new director would be open to considering supported employment.

As Janice drives through the downtown area, she is struck by how her job has changed over the past two years. She remembers how uncomfortable she was two years ago approaching employers she did not know; always wondering how receptive they would be, often finding that her timing was wrong, or that she was viewed as just another sales person and from the "Handicapped Center," no less! She is so glad she doesn't have to do those "cold calls" very often any more. Somehow, she has been able to develop advocates who have generated business contracts for herand have improved her agency's image. It has been quite a help. Now when she calls on an employer, she is viewed with much more credibility and receives a more open response. Certainly the placements she has made in the leading companies in town are a tribute to the community support her agency has received.

As Janice drives by the hospital, she remembers how her first

advocate, her executive director, provided her with the entre. The executive director, who met the new hospital administrator through the Chamber of Commerce, had set up the initial appointment. From this contact and subsequent survey of the hospitals personnel needs, four jobs were created across three departments. This was particularly important because it resulted in cost-effective job coaching and better support.

As she makes a turn at the light, she notices several clinics in which she has job sites. These were arranged with the help of the hospital administrator after he understood how supported employment worked and saw the benefits to the hospital, the employees with disabilities, co-workers, and the community.

As she passes the ATC company, one of the largest employers in the community, she is reminded that her supported employment business advisory committee recently agreed to set up a meeting with a top executive of this company. She smiles while thinking how glad she is that she does not have to tackle that corporate bureaucracy and sell her program on her own. Just looking at the size of the building reminds her how difficult the task would be on her own.

She is approaching home now. As she does so, she notices that the neighbors down the street, the Smiths, have planted new trees in the front yard. She makes a mental note to stop by this

weekend. She wants to let Mr. Smith know that she is making a presentation next week at the bank in which he works. It was his effort that had led to the meeting with the president. She hopes that after her presentation, Ms. Smith can let her know how it was received and help her decide how to proceed.

As she pulls into her driveway, she notices that her husband made it home before her. She hopes he has dinner started--fat chance on a Friday night! Despite their diet, he will probably want to go out for pizza or a fish fry. Oh, well, at least he set up a meeting with his union steward at the plant next week. If he can help her develop a positive relationship with the union, he certainly deserves his pizza.

As she gets her briefcase and walks into the house, she realizes that by using referrals, her job has become much more enjoyable. She has met interesting people, has created more jobs with fewer rejections, and feels more closely connected to the community. It has been a pretty good two years.

The Referral Model

The preceding vignette illustrates the largely untapped potential in the community for helping obtain job opportunities for persons with disabilities. The referral model is an approach to job development in which access to business decision makers is achieved through third-party advocates--persons who are committed

to community employment and who have business contacts (Nietupski & Verstegen, 1990). Those advocates use their influence to gain employer interest in exploring how supported employment might benefit his/her enterprise.

Benefits of the Referral Model

There are a number of benefits to a referral model, particularly in comparison to the "cold call" model; approaching employers with whom no prior connection exists (Nietupski, Verstegen, & Hamre-Nietupski, 1992):

a. Referrals add credibility to one's service (McGloughlin, Garner, & Callahan, 1987), because it comes recommended by a trusted person, the advocate. Strong support from a broad array of community leaders can lead to an enhanced image for the agency and the clients served.

b. Referrals are a time-honored business tradition--a common way of doing business in both large and small communities and companies (Nietupski & Verstegen 1990).

c. Referrals allow access to higher-level decision makers in larger businesses, avoiding the "personnel department run-around" often faced by job developers.

d. Referrals can save time and effort in job development (Venne, 1990) because strong, well-connected advocates can do much of the job-development groundwork.

e. Referrals lead to greater job development success (Venne, 1990). The marketing and sales literature is quite clear on the superiority of referrals over cold calls (Estes, 1988).

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to describe a process for leveraging community support in job development through the referral model. The steps in this process and recommended strategies are drawn from a combination of the marketing/sales and job development literature as well as the authors' five years of experience in job development.

Steps in the Referral Model Process

To assist job developers in establishing and using referral networks, a six-step process is outlined. Each step has a small, manageable goal, with substeps leading to that goal. When put all together, these six steps can result in attainment of the ultimate, larger goal: integrated community jobs for consumers.

Step 1: Prospecting for advocates. The goal of the first step in the referral-model process is to identify several potentially strong advocates--persons who will actively assist job developers in making employer contacts (Nietupski & Verstegen 1990). This goal can be achieved through several sub-steps. First, job developers should develop a preliminary advocate list. Logical candidates include: a) current employers who have hired

through the agency; b) agency board members with business contacts; c) agency administrators/staff and their spouses; d) other family friends/acquaintances either in business or with business contacts; e) parents of agency consumers with business contacts, f) professionals in related services (e.g., JTPA; Vocational Rehabilitation); g) contacts in social or professional organizations; and h) Chamber of Commerce or economic development staff (Nietupski, Hamre-Nietupski, Welch, & Anderson, 1983). This preliminary list should represent a broad spectrum of the cummunity to insure that all possibilities are considered.

Second, job developers should prioritize this list and identify the top four or five potential advocates. These advocates should meet two criteria: strong interest in/commitment to the agency's supported employment program and connections/ influence with business persons. These top candidates then could be recruited to assist job development efforts.

Third, job developers should "educate" their potential advocates. Specifically, this includes reviewing the key aspects of supported employment and the reasons why advocates are needed. This lets the advocate know what would be expected should s/he agree to assist the program. It also provides a consistent message about supported employment to be presented to employers.

Fourth, job developers should determine the level of

support advocates are willing to provide. Willingness to call for and be present at a meeting with the job developer and a business person represents a high level of support. Clearly, if an advocate is willing to serve in this capacity, he or she can be a tremendous asset. A slightly lower level of commitment, but one that is still quite substantial, is willingness to contact an employer, discuss the benefits of supported employment and encourage an employer to agree to meet with the job developer when he or she calls. The third, and lowest, level is when advocates grant permission to use their name as a referral source. If an advocate is willing only to serve in this capacity, job developers might choose to work closely with more committed advocates.

Step 2: Identifying and developing business contacts through advocates. Once advocates have been recruited, their business contacts can be explored. The goal of this step is to target the two or three employers most likely to consider supported employment. The first sub-step in this process is to discuss with the advocate the employers with whom s/he has a close professional and/or personal relationship. These employers can include suppliers to the business, customers of the business, those in a similar profession or colleagues in the Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, Kiwanis, etc. In discussing employer contacts, job developers might probe for information about the business (type of

business, size of work force, recent developments in the business such as expansion/lay offs, etc.). Also important is the nature of the relationship (social, professional, general acquaintance). This allows a job developer to gauge the strength of the association between the advocate and his/her contact. Finally, the advocate might provide insight as to the kinds of benefits of hiring disabled employees that would be of interest to the employer contact (reduced turnover, efficiency through redistribution of duties, community image). Table 1 illustrates the kind of information gathered from advocates and used to rank employer contacts.

Insert Table 1 about here

The second sub-step is to finalize the list of potential employer prospects. In our work with employers, we have asked them to rank the prospects in terms of both their relationship to the advocate and their likelihood to consider hiring persons with disabilities. Those with the highest ranking form the initial prospects.

Step 3: Approaching employers through advocates. The goal of this step on the referral model is for advocates to contact employers, introduce the concept of supported employment and its benefits, prepare the employer for contact by the job developer,

and gauge employer receptivity. To achieve this goal, job developers might first "script" the advocates to insure that the desired message is communicated to the prospective business contact. Scripting can be formal or informal--ranging from written key points to informal discussion of those points. Brochures highlighting key information about supported employment might be given to the advocate if s/he plans a face-to-face meeting or a follow-up letter.

Second, the advocate should contacts his/her business acquaintance/colleague. This can take several forms including phone, in person, or, less optimally, by letter. In that contact, the advocate describes supported employment and its benefits, asks the employer is s/he sees the potential for supported employment benefitting his/her business and probes for any concerns or reservations. If the job developer is not present, the advocate could encourage the employer to meet with the job developer to survey personnel needs and explore supported employment possibilities.

Third, the job developers should discuss the outcome of the initial contact with the advocate. In this way, the job developer can gauge the level of employer interest and prepare to address specific issues or concerns when s/he contacts the employer directly.

Step 4: Facilitate hiring decision for targeted business with advocate support. The goal of this step is to receive a yes or no hiring decision. As with the other steps in this process-oriented model, several sub-steps are important in achieving a hiring decision. First, and most importantly, job developers should interview/survey the employer to learn more about the business, perceived needs, duties that might be performed by supported employees, employer interest and motivations, and the likelihood of a mutually beneficial relationship (Nietupski, Verstegen, & Hamre-Nietupski, in press). When the job developer meets with an employer for the first time, s/he should define his/her service and key benefits to the business (Estes, 1988). Then, questions should be asked pertaining to the business and areas of need/benefit. Table 3 illustrates the kinds of questions that might be asked. Generally, questions related to areas of importance to the business, perhaps suggested by advocates, might be addressed (e.g., turnover in the mail room; time/cost for hiring, training, supervising new employees). As indicated in Table 3, questions that spark employer interest should be followed by "trial close" questions (Nietupski et al., in press)--"Would it benefit your business if we could reduce your turnover?" or "Would it be a benefit if we screened candidates for your consideration, trained them and assisted your staff in supervision?" The survey

appointment could end with a discussion of who makes the hiring decision and whether a proposal meeting could be scheduled to present findings and receive a yes or no decision.

Insert Table 3 about here

Second, following the survey meeting with the employer, a job-site survey should be conducted to identify duties and determine if they match the capabilities and interests of the consumer(s) for whom employment is being sought (McGloughlin et al., 1987). A careful analysis of the job site demands (cf. Moon, Goodall, Barcus, & Brooke, 1985) should allow the job developer to determine if a suitable match exists.

Third, a proposal should be developed detailing: a) employer-perceived benefits identified in the interview/survey; b) position(s)/job duties for supported employees; c) recommended hours and wages; d) recommended candidates, and e) an implementation timeline (Nietupski, et al., 1992). This proposal is an important tool for communicating what has been learned about the business. This general-to-specific sequence can be useful in showing the employer how supported employment can work in his/her business and guiding them to a hiring decision.

Fourth, the job developers should present his/her proposal and obtain a decision. Nietupski et al. (1992) describes how this

meeting might proceed. In essence, the job developer should review the benefits, asking decision makers to confirm that they, in fact, perceive these as benefits (i.e., "trial close"). This same review/trial close process should be followed with duties, hours and wages, and recommended candidates. If employers agree on each of the above items, the job developer can ask the hiring question (e.g., "Since we seem to be in agreement about (benefits), the duties that can be reassigned to achieve these benefits, the wages, hours and candidate, is there any reason we couldn't proceed as indicated in the timeline?") and wait for a response. If disagreement on any item occurs, the job developer should probe for the areas of concern. For example, if the employer indicates that s/he feels the volume of the identified duties does not warrant a 20-hour-per-week position, the job developer might offer to conduct a more precise time study. If this is acceptable to the employer, the job developer might again trial close by asking "If our time study shows sufficient work volume, would you agree with this position description and hours?" At that point, the proposal meeting might be rescheduled for after the time study. Such a meeting should follow the same review/trial-close format, culminating in a hiring decision.

Fifth, throughout this process, and particularly after the employer survey, advocates should be briefed on outcomes and asked

how their contact perceived the process. Valuable information and advice from the advocate can be obtained. Further, the advocate might be able to follow up with the employer, assure them if needed, answer questions or concerns, and relay those to the job developer as s/he prepares the proposal.

Step 5: Building/maintaining rapport with advocates. While cited as "Step 5", this step is an ongoing one, throughout the referral model process. In essence, the referral model is built upon relationships--trust and rapport between the job developer and the advocate. There are several ways to build/maintain these relationships. First, the job developer should maintain contact and communication at critical junctures in the referral process: a) after advocates contact employers; b) following the survey; c) prior to the proposal presentation; and d) after the hiring decision. This lets the advocate know that his/her work has been acted upon.

Second, when contacting advocates, the job developer should inform them of the positive outcomes and ask their advice for solving any concerns. Feedback on outcomes can serve as a powerful reinforcer and motivator for continued advocacy. Asking advice acknowledges the respect held for the advocate's expertise, and again can serve as a motivator.

Third, the advocate should be credited for the successes

achieved through his/her assistance (Estes, 1988; Venne, 1990). Credit in the form of a personal thank you, a note or letter, an award or certificate of appreciation, an article in the agency newsletter, flowers, or dinner out are but a few of the ways to show appreciation for advocate support (Estes, 1988; Venne, 1990).

Fourth, continue to request advocate assistance in approaching other employers. While sensitive to advocate time, job developers should continue to ask advocates if they are willing to provide access to other businesses. An axiom in business and every-day life is that "success breeds success". Thus, successful advocacy might be followed up with requests for continued assistance.

Step 6: Expanding the advocate pool. The final step in building broad-based community support in job development also is an ongoing one: regularly adding to the list of referral sources. There are several ways to add to an agency's advocate pool. First, when obtaining a placement, job developers might ask employers if they would be willing to refer other possible business acquaintances (Estes, 1988; McGloughlin et al., 1987). If an employer is excited about working with the agency, he or she might offer immediately to assist. S/He might, however, wish to see if the placement is successful before referring supported employment to a business associate. Skillful job developers

should encourage such a careful evaluation of their services, perhaps indicating that they will ask for referrals if the business is satisfied with the placement after a specified trial period..

Second, the best way to build advocates is to serve them well (Como & Hagner, 1986; Estes, 1988). Thus, if a job developer carefully analyzes personnel needs, carefully matches consumers to jobs, and supports the employer after the placement, s/he is in a much better position to request assistance in approaching other employers.

Third, ask for referrals from employers who say no to your proposal. At times, businesses choose not to hire for legitimate reasons (Estes, 1988): a) lack of money for new positions; b) their work demands are beyond the capabilities of the consumers or agency; and c) timing (e.g., construction that temporarily eliminates work space). In cases such as these, employers might still be willing to work on an agency's behalf. While the most effective employer advocates are ones who have hired, those with legitimate reasons for not hiring at the present time still can provide access to other businesses.

Fourth, join business and/or service organizations through which both the agency and the job developer can become better known. Membership in the Chamber of Commerce and active

involvement in its activities are excellent ways to make contacts and build relationships. These relationships can then become opportunities to develop advocates.

Summary and Conclusions

The life of a job developer, in many ways, is similar to a salesperson's--s/he needs to believe in his/her service, s/he must understand customer needs and be able to identify opportunities for consumers to meet employer needs (McCarthy & Perrealt, 1987), and s/he must guide businesses to making decisions to hire persons with disabilities. Similar to a salesperson, the job developer faces doubts, rejection, and successes (Estes, 1988). Also similar to a salesperson, the successes can outnumber the doubts and rejections through the skillful building of a broad support base: advocates who help the job developer access the business community.

The vignette described above illustrates how broad-based community support can make approaching employers less stressful and can increase job development success. Strong advocates can make a job developer's work more rewarding and allow him/her to become a more integral part of the community.

As with any process, successful use of the referral model requires skill on the part of the job developer. Not only should s/he use a systematic method for developing community support,

s/he must do so through persistence, astute observations, and effective interpersonal skills. It is our experience that job developers who combine those personal qualities with a process such as the one described here ultimately can create support for their efforts as did Janice in the introductory vignette. The end result can be substantially increased job opportunities for persons with disabilities.

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Table 1

One Advocate's Employer Contracts

Advocate: Bob Brown, Agency Board Member, Corporate Loan Officer of Local Bank

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Business Contact #1: Ajax Window Manufacturing

Friends with President/CEO James Jones. Golf partners. Occasional lunch meetings. President strongly against welfare --wants people to work for a living. Has union work force on floor; nonunion clerical and grounds workers. 250 employees.

Business Contact #2: New Word Paper Products

Vice-president finance Robert Gold. Wives are best friends. Belong to same country club. Business in declining posture-- 200 employees laid off in last 2 years.

Business Contact #3: Midwest Savings and Loan

Knows Tom Phillips, the newly appointed president of the area's largest savings and loan. Considered an "efficiency expert." One of the youngest executives to rise to presidency. Served as an officer with Bob Brown in Kiwanis.

Business Contact #4: Home Fabrics Co.

Bonnie Anderson, proprietor. Ms. Anderson started her first store with a loan from Mr. Brown's bank. Has expanded to two local stores and four other outlets in this part of the state. Mr. Brown admires her business acumen, spunk and hard work.

V.

Job Retention Within the DHP Project

JOB RETENTION WITHIN THE DHP PROJECT

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Introduction/Background

The purpose of this manuscript is to discuss the job retention of students with mild to severe mental retardation, transitioned to supported employment through the Dispersed Heterogeneous Placement (DHP) Transition to Supported Employment Project. This project (H158N00054), is funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services. The retention data and discussion presented are based on the first two years of this three year project, covering the period from July, 1990 - July, 1992. The project was conducted in two locations utilizing two adult service providers: Options of Linn County in Cedar Rapids, Iowa and The Association for Retarded Citizens of Johnson County in Iowa City. The DHP participants were high school seniors with mild, moderate and severe/profound mental retardation, ranging in age from 18 - 22 years.

The intent of the DHP project was to develop jobs for persons with mild, moderate and severe/profound mental retardation in larger businesses or two businesses in close proximity. Three to four or more individuals were placed in various departments/areas within a business or across two proximal businesses, facilitating integration with nondisabled co-workers. A job trainer was assigned to each job site to assist consumers with learning assigned tasks, remaining available to both consumer and employer for problem resolution. The primary goals of the DHP were to show that persons with severe/profound disabilities were able to obtain and maintain jobs, and to address the cost-effective utilization of one job trainer at one job site serving multiple consumers.

To understand the retention results for Project Years (PY) 1 and 2, a brief review of the job development process is presented. The consumers for PY1 and PY2 were referred by their teachers to the project. The teachers completed a consumer employment profile highlighting the abilities of the consumer to accomplish a variety of tasks, previous work history, support needs, recommended ideal job situations and noted any area(s) of special concern. Thereafter, an agency and project staff member interviewed the consumer and/or family members, and observed the consumer in school and community settings to elaborate on the information provided on the profile. For example, information concerning appropriate and challenging behavior, effective prompting, possible adaptations, management strategies and the like were obtained through interviews and observations. In conjunction, with the material provided by the teacher, this information formed the basis from which the job development process began.

Upon review of the interests and abilities of all of the DHP candidates the agency and project staff developers targeted potential employers to contact. During the initial contact with a perspective employer, supported employment information was discussed, resulting in the scheduling of a needs survey. The needs survey consisted of a detailed interview with the employer highlighting tasks critical to success but not always being accomplished by current employees. The survey also included a tour of the business, at which time current employees were observed performing their jobs.

Based on the information gathered by the needs survey, the job developers reviewed the DHP candidates for specific job matches. Once candidates and job duties were matched a proposal was developed noting the benefits to the employer, proposed tasks/jobs to be filled, candidates for the positions and a timeline by which

interviews, staff training and job placement might occur. This proposal was presented to the employer for confirmation, changes were made if necessary and a start date established.

Prior to consumer placement, the job trainer learned the assigned tasks. A task analysis was developed to assist with tracking job task mastery. A task analysis was developed for each consumer based on individual duty assignments. The consumer with mild disabilities was placed first. Once task attainment was achieved, the next consumer was placed. It was expected that the trainer would spend the majority of the time with the consumer with severe/profound disabilities, so these consumers tended to be placed after those with less intense support needs. Once all of the consumers were placed, task acquisition had occurred and co-worker/supervisor support was established, the job trainer attempted to fade from the site and transfer support responsibilities to the business. Again, the consumer(s) and or employer could request continuation of services if deemed necessary. When fading was completed, follow-up services were provided by the adult agency.

Consumers Demographics

As Table 1 indicates, a total of 24 consumers were served in DHP job sites during Project Years 1 and 2. Of the 24 consumers served, 17 were from Cedar Rapids and seven were from Iowa City. Fourteen of the consumers were female and ten were male. Consumers ranged in age from eighteen to twenty-two. As previously noted, the consumers served were diagnosed with mild, moderate or severe/profound disabilities. In PY1, 25% of the consumers served had mild retardation, 42% had moderate retardation, and 33% had severe/profound mental retardation. In PY2, 41.7% served had mild mental retardation, 41.7% had moderate mental retardation

and 16.6% had severe/profound mental retardation. For PY1 and PY2 combined a total of 33.3% of the consumers served had mild mental retardation, 41.7% had moderate mental retardation and 25% had severe/profound mental retardation.

Insert Table 1 Here

Job Site Demographics

A total of six job sites were developed during the first two years of the DHP project. The following discussion is organized by location, including a brief summary of the types of positions held at the job site.

Cedar Rapids

IBM was a PY1 site that originally employed four consumers. The consumers worked four to five days a week and held positions as a document shredder, document preparer, general clerk and mailroom/secretary assistant. Two consumers had severe/profound mental retardation, one consumer had moderate mental retardation, and one consumer had mild mental retardation.

Mercy Medical Center was also a PY1 site, employing four consumers. The consumers worked five days a week between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.. Two consumers worked in the dishroom washing silverware and stacking cleaned dishes. Another consumer sorted and packaged silverware and wrapped bread in the food preparation area. The fourth consumer vacuumed rugs, emptied trash and cleaned waiting rooms through the housekeeping department. Of the four

consumers, one had severe/profound mental retardation, two had moderate mental retardation and one had mild mental retardation.

Defense Contracts was established in PY2 and was targeted to hire six consumers. Although, six positions were identified as a result of the needs survey, only four consumers were eventually placed. All four of the consumers worked five days a week. Three of the consumers held clerical positions, the consumers were responsible for photocopying, operating the fax machine, mail delivery, limited computer data entry, collating, stapling, and collecting/sorting recyclable paper. Two of the consumers had moderate disabilities and the other two consumers had mild disabilities.

Grantwood Area Education Agency also was a PY2 site, employing three consumers, plus a person with moderate disabilities who was hired just prior to the start of the DHP project. Consumers worked five days a week. One consumer served as a general clerk throughout the facility and the other two as clerks in the media department. The general clerk was responsible for maintaining five photocopy machines, (cleaning the glass surfaces, filling the paper), collecting recyclable paper, collating material and assisting with mailings. The media clerks checked video tapes and removed date due stickers from library books. Of the three consumers employed, one had a severe/profound disability, one had a moderate disability and one had a mild disability.

<u>Iowa City</u>

American College Testing (ACT) was developed in PY1 and employed four consumers. The consumers worked five days a week and were placed across three departments. Two consumers were placed in a financial aid department as clerks.

Their primary duties included matching forms to prelabeled envelopes, labeling envelopes, preparing other materials to be mailed and checking financial aid forms for missing information. A third consumer was a computer room assistant responsible for separating print-outs and dispersing them to the correct internal mailbox, materials delivery, and miscellaneous clerical functions. The Publications Department hired the fourth consumer as a clerk to file, breakdown old files, collate, staple, and to perform other duties as needed. One consumer had a severe/profound disability, two consumers had moderate disabilities and one consumer had a mild disability.

Iowa State Bank and Trust and the University of Iowa Purchasing Department was a PY2 site. These businesses were within one block of each other and were served by one job trainer. There were three consumers placed, two worked five days a week and the other consumer initially worked three days per week, which by summer was expanded to five days a week. The two consumers, one with a mild disability and the other with a moderate disability, at the bank held positions of bank clerks. Their duties included photocopying, internal mail distribution, collating, preparing materials to mail, and filing. The other consumer, with a mild disability, at the purchasing department was a receiving clerk responsible for date stamping incoming mail, filing invoices and distributing internal mail.

Retention

The combined retention rate for PY1 and PY2 is displayed in Table 2. To compare PY1 and PY2 the results are reported in three month intervals. It is important to note that although 24 consumers were served in DHP sites, two consumers only

worked for two months, therefore not meeting the three month minimum for reporting purposes.

As Table 2 indicates, the overall retention rate at the three month interval was 91%. 100% of the consumers with mild (8/8) and severe (5/5) mental retardation and 77% with moderate retardation (7/9) were employed three months after placement.

Insert Table 2 Here

The six month retention rate was exactly the same as the three month figure. At nine months, however, the overall retention rate was 75%, meaning that 75% (9/12) of those consumers placed at least nine months prior to July 1992, maintained their original job. The nine month figures for consumers with mild, moderate and severe/profound MR, respectively were 67% (2/3), 100% (5/5) and 50% (2/4).

The overall retention rate at 12 months was 67% (8/12), with the rates for consumers with mild, moderate and severe/profound disabilities 33% (1/3), 100% (5/5), and 50% (2/4) respectively. At 15 months, the overall retention rate was 58% (7 of 12), with 0% (0/3), 100% (5/5) and 50% (2/4) of consumers with mild, moderate, and severe/profound, retardation respectively, maintaining employment 15 months after placement.

In a study of persons with mental retardation employed in the community, Lagomarcino (1990) identified six major job separation categories (1) lack of job responsibility, (2) inadequate task production, (3) social-vocational behavior, (4) economy, (5) health, and (6) change in job status. Briefly, lack of job responsibility

is described as poor work habits, (absenteeism). Task production refers to inadequate performance (production). Social-vocational behaviors addresses interactions at the job site, (insubordination). Economy refers to budgetary constraints that result in layoff or inability to hire previously agreed upon supported employees. Health concerns reflect a physical change, (inability to perform duties). Job status change refers to a positive change (promotion) or a decision to seek other employment.

Table 3, lists each consumer who was separated from her/his job in PY1 and 2. Also noted are severity levels, job titles and separation reasons. As indicated in Table 3, the primary reason for job separation, involving 7 of 21 consumers, was "Change in Status." This contrasts with Lagomarcino's (1990) findings of "Lack of Job Responsibility" as the primary reason for job separation. This difference occurred in part because the worksite climate in one of our sites became quite negative for three of four consumers who had been placed and the two additional consumers who were to be placed. This unusual occurrence, described in the discussion section below, skewed our outcomes and contributed to these differences with Lagomarcino's (1990) findings.

"Social-Vocational Behavior" and "Lack of Job Responsibility" were the next leading reasons for job separation among our consumers. Four individuals left their jobs for these reasons, two within each category.

Insert Table 3 Here

Table 4 shows separation reasons by severity level. Setting aside the five individuals whose change in status was prompted by worksite climate concerns, the primary reasons for separation by consumers with mild disabilities was lack of responsibility. Within this separation category, absenteeism was the specific cause of job loss by two consumers with mild MR. This finding matches Lagomarcino's (1990) finding regarding reasons for separation by persons with mild retardation.

Change in status was the main reason for separation among consumers with moderate MR. Specifically, the hostile work place climate at one site resulted in two resignation and a decision not to place an additional agreed upon candidates with moderate retardation. In addition, two consumers with moderate MR separated because of a desire not to work (S_{11}) or parental desire not to have consumer work (S_7), both causes falling under Lagomarcino's "Change in Status" category.

Four consumers with severe/profound mental retardation, lost jobs. Two consumers exhibited inappropriate "Social-Vocational Behavior" making this category the largest single separation reason for this group, in contrast to Lagomarcino's findings with this population. One DHP consumer struck a fellow employee and the other consumer had frequent, loud verbal outbursts that proved uncontrollable. The remaining two job separations by consumers with severe/profound retardation resulted from "Health" and "Change in Status" reasons. Specifically, one consumer died after being employed for eight months and another was never placed due to concerns over the workplace climate

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Insert Table 4 Here

Discussion of Results and Recommendations

Within the DHP project, "Change in Status" was the primary reason for job separation, involving 7 of 15 separations. In five of the seven cases, individuals left jobs/were not placed due to negative work climate. These findings suggest that failure on the part of project staff to identify staff resentment at one large job site. Specifically, project staff relied upon the stated openness of the head of one particular business establishment and did not adequately anticipate staff resentment and concerns.

To reduce the likelihood of job separation for this reason, professionals must improve their observations of workplace climate and job site relations prior to and after placement. A flexible, open workplace climate would seem to be critical in allowing people with support needs to maintain employment. Nisbet and Hagner (1988) recommend extensive examination of the social interaction and support characteristics of a work environment prior to placement. This information can suggest site suitability as well as the natural support possibilities currently in place at the business site that might be expanded upon. Expectations for such a collaborative process should be established early to insure that the business is open to working through the support challenges consumers may experience. In addition, ongoing communication, during and after, placement is essential to identify and prevent/solve problems that contribute to worksite climate issues.

On the basis of this finding, the DHP Project implemented several strategies to promote a positive climate (Moon et al, 1985). These included: 1) rapport establishment between parties; 2) explaining training techniques and involving

supervisors and co-workers in training; 3) describing a consumer's abilities and support needs and encouraging interaction with the consumer. A three step process was used to implement these strategies: 1) an all-staff meeting at the job site prior to consumer placement to answer questions about supported employment, including a candid discussion about working with persons with disabilities; 2) job trainer modeling appropriate techniques of training and interacting with the consumer, and 3) monthly performance/update meetings held at the job site with the supervisor, job trainer and project staff to address areas of concern. A proactive approach to problem identification naturally flows into problem resolution, accomplished easily if good lines of communication exist.

The job separations due to "Social-Vocational Behavior" suggest the need for closer attention to past experience when job matching. For example, we might have prevented the striking of a co-worker by S_{10} had we attended more closely to this consumer's need for a more confined, less open work space. Future job development planning should incorporate observation of consumers at work experience sites in developing job match recommendations.

The third most prevalent reason for job separation, "Lack of Responsibility" (e.g. absenteeism), suggests several future actions. First, students need to learn early that attendance is important in school, home and community activities. Showing up, being there on time and remaining at work throughout the work period should be an ongoing expectation for consumers. Second, job matches that result in enjoyable jobs must be created to promote reliable attendance. Often, absenteeism represents the only means for a consumer to communicate dissatisfaction. Third, consumers need to be taught how to resign when a job loses its appeal. Fewer and fewer nondisabled employees remain with the same firm from graduation to retirement.

For most DHP consumers, this was their first post-school job. As they seek new job challenges, they need the skills necessary to gracefully resign rather then simply not showing up for work.

Conclusion

This article examined the reasons for job separation by 15 DHP consumers. Examining reasons for separation is important because it guides the improvement of job development and training. Learning from our mistakes will enable us to better achieve our goal of integrated employment for people with disabilities. This article examined reasons for job separation with the DHP project and offered suggestions for improving job retention in supported employment.

TABLE 1

CONSUMER DEMOGRAPHICS

	Consumer	Age	Gender	Severity Level	Job Site
PROJECT YEAR 1	S_1	21	F	Moderate MR	IBM
	S_2	20	M	Severe/Profound	IBM
	S_3	20	M	Severe/Profound	IBM
	S_4	18	F	Mild	IBM
	S_5	21	F	Moderate	Mercy Med Cntr
	S_6	20	F	Severe/Profound	Mercy Med Cntr
	S_7	20	M	Moderate	Mercy Med Cntr
	S_8	19	M	Mild	Mercy Med Cntr
	S_9	18	F	Mild	ACT
	S_{10}	19	F	Severe/Profound	ACT
	S_{11}	20	F	Moderate	ACT
	S_{12}	19	F	Moderate	ACT
PROJECT YEAR 2	S_{13}	18	M	Mild	Defense Contracts
	S_{14}	20	M	Moderate	Defense Contracts
	S_{15}	20	F	Moderate	Defense Contracts
	S_{16}	19	M	Severe/Profound	Defense Contracts
	S_{17}	20	F	Mild	Defense Contracts
	S_{18}	20	M	Moderate	Defense Contracts
	S_{19}	20	F	Mild	Grantwood AEA
	S_{20}	20	F	Severe/Profound	Grantwood AEA
	S_{21}	21	F	Moderate	Grantwood AEA
	S_{22}	20	M	Mild	Iowa State Bank
	S_{23}	19	F	Mild	UI Purchasing Dept
	S_{24}	20	M	Moderate	Iowa State Bank

TABLE 2

EMPLOYMENT STATUS

3 TO 15 MONTHS AFTER PLACEMENT

	3 mo N=22	6 mo N=22	9 mo N=9	12 mo N=8	15 mo N=7
Mild	**8/8** *100%*	**8/8** *100%*	**2/3** *67%*	**1/3** *33%*	**0/3** *0%*
Moderate	**7/9** *77%*	**7/9** *77%*	**5/5** *100%*	**5/5** *100%*	**5/5** *100%*
Severe	**5/5** 100%	**5/5** 100%	**2/4** 50%	**2/4** 50%	**2/4** 50%
TOTAL	**20/22** 91%	**20/22** 91%	**9/12** 75%	**8/12** 67%	**7/12** 58%

NOTE: The first two intervals (3 and 6 months) reflect PY1 and PY2 combined activity. The nine month through 15 month periods reflects consumers in PY1 only. Thus, the decline in the N's during the 15 month reporting period.

TABLE 3

REASONS FOR JOB SEPARATION

Consumer	Severity	Job Title	Reasons for Separation
S_2	Severe/Profound	Document Preparation	Deceased (Health)
S_4	Mild	Stocking Mailroom	Inappropriate social skills (Social-Voc behavior)
S_7	Moderate	Dishroom	At parent's request, consumer resigned (Change in status)
S_8	Mild	Housekeeping	Absenteeism (Lack of responsibility)
S_9	Mild	Computer Room Assistance	Absenteeism (Lack of responsibility)
S_{10}	Severe/Profound	Financial Aid Clerk	Consumer struck co-worker (Social-Voc behavior)
S_{11}	Moderate	Financial Aid Clerk	Resigned to pursue other interests (Change in status)
S_{14}	Moderate	Clerk	Resigned* (Change in status)
S_{15}	Moderate	Clerk	Resigned* (Change in status)
S_{16}	Severe/Profound	Clerk	Consumer not placed* (Change in status)
S_{17}	Mild	Data Entry Clerk	Resigned* (Change in status)
S_{18}	Moderate	Clerk	Consumer not placed* (Change in status)
S_{19}	Mild	Maintained Photocopiers	Position eliminated due to budgetary constraints. (Economy)
S_{20}	Severe/Profound	Media Clerk	Unacceptable behavior (Social-voc behavior)
S_{21}	Moderate	Media Clerk	Inadequate task production

***Workplace climate unsuitable for long-term placement.**

TABLE 4

REASONS FOR JOB SEPARATION

BY SEVERITY LEVEL

	MILD MR	MODERATE MR	SEVERE MR	TOTAL SAMPLE
Lack of Responsibility	2			2
Task Production		1		1
Social-Vocational Behavior	1		2	3
Economy	1			1
Health			1	1
Change in Status	1	5	1	7